

The Secret of Selling ~ Anything

A road map to success for the salesman...

who is ***not*** aggressive
who is ***not*** a “smooth talker”
and who is ***not*** an extrovert

Harry Browne



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Internet edition: 2008

Also by Harry Browne

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The Complete Guide to Swiss Banks (1976)

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INTRODUCTION

Introduction

This book is a compilation of two unpublished manuscripts (*The Secret of Success* and *Selling is Easy*) written by Harry Browne in 1966 and 1969. He was thirty-three and thirty-six years of age at the time and a sales consultant and lecturer in the Los Angeles area.

He had twenty years of successful selling and sales management behind him. He had written folders and booklets on salesmanship and economics. He had authored the courses “The Art of Profitable Living” and “The Economics of Success” ~ which had received excellent market acceptance in Southern California. His weekly newspaper column, “The American Way,” was being published in 110 newspapers. And he was in demand as a speaker, consultant and writer ~ all of which had been accomplished with no more than a high school education.

Harry was not the stereotypical hard-driving, constantly-on-the-go success seeker, however. In fact, he had found a way to make an unusually good income as a salesman while working only fifteen to twenty hours per week. This allowed him the luxury of enjoying his non-professional interests ~ classical music, opera, good food and wine, sports, television, and writing.

Because he had never wanted to be an “average” salesman, he had paid particular attention to the top successes he had met along the way ~ observing them closely to determine the nature of success. In so doing, he had come to understand why people buy and the world around him. And he had found that the principles he had observed applied to any type of success-seeking ~ whether or not in the sales field.

Every word in this book was written by him from his own successful experience. And although the manuscripts remained unpublished until now it is an example of his ability to communicate to others the knowledge he’d gained early on.

I hope you enjoy it!

Best wishes,
Pamela Wolfe Browne

PROLOGUE

Prologue

If you've read other selling books, you're probably tired of the false promises that never quite work out. You're probably tired of being told "you can do it if you just believe you can."

You're probably tired of reading about tricks that made a particular sale ~ tricks that *may* have been appropriate to a particular situation, but not yours ~ and even if they were appropriate, how would you have thought of them at the right time?

If you've read books on selling before or listened to "sales experts", you're probably tired of being pumped with hot air ~ told how you must "come alive", be full of enthusiasm, dominate the world around ~ all the things that don't happen to be a part of your basic nature.

Well, this book isn't anything like that. In fact, this book was written to refute many clichés of selling that have been accepted without question for years.

This book will prove to you, I hope, that the stereotyped image of the "born salesman" is a mistake. You don't have to remake your personality and become super-enthusiastic, super-aggressive, domineering. Not only are those traits not necessary, they are actually a hindrance to making sales.

And you won't have to develop that uncanny ability to come up with the right answer at the right time ~ that super-human knack of having the brilliant flash of insight that is so prevalent in books on selling. Sure, given several days to think about it, the writer of a sales book can always come up with a solution to a sales problem. But how does that help you when confronted face-to-face with a question that must be answered now? This book will show you that you don't need such skills.

This book can truly revolutionize your selling career ~ but only because it will show you that you no longer need to waste your time developing skills that are of no value to a salesman. For example, here are some of the points that will be made in the course of this book:

1. Contrary to the accepted mythology, enthusiasm is not a virtue; it destroys more sales than it creates.
2. "Positive thinking" is an unrealistic fallacy. The salesman who thinks negatively has a far greater chance for success than the so-called "positive thinker."
3. Sales success does not come from convincing people to buy things they don't want.

4. The salesman who always has an answer for every objection is also probably plugging along with a very low income.
5. Extroverts don't make the best salesmen; they are invariably outsold by introverts.
6. To be a good salesman, you don't have to be a "smooth talker."
7. Another all-time sales fallacy is the statement "When the going gets tough, the tough get going". When the going gets tough, I usually take a vacation.
8. The desire to be able to motivate others is unrealistic and foolish. A really-great salesman will never try to motivate anyone.

Perhaps all of this sounds so far removed from what you've heard about selling through the years that you wonder how it could possibly be true. I intend to demonstrate the validity of these statements in two ways.

First, my own experience verifies their worth. Almost invariably, in any selling experience where I've found myself, I have outsold everyone else around me ~ usually while working far fewer hours.

In addition, I've seen these principles work for a few others, too ~ a *very few*, for they are unknown to most people.

But there is nothing mysterious about them ~ and that brings us to a second way in which I will demonstrate their validity. I will prove them to you. We will deal with life logically and carefully in this book. Everything will be proven in terms of the real world as it is ~ in ways we can both understand.

And because these principles are self-evident, you will be able to apply them simply and easily. You will not be told again (for the hundredth time) that "if you'll just believe them and try them and remove any thought of failure from your mind, they will eventually work for you". No, you're tired of having to approach success in terms of faith.

I will prove the validity of these principles and then you can integrate them into your daily life ~ one at a time, if you so choose. And you will most likely see their effect the moment you try them.

But I'm not going to guarantee your success. I'm not going to tell you that you can't miss ~ because that would be unrealistic. For it depends on you and your willingness to reorient your attitude to see things as they really are.

The old clichés of selling are really attempts to get “something for nothing.” They promise to bring about sales faster without any greater insight. But invariably (as with all “something for nothing” attempts) the salesman works harder with no greater success.

If you will just take the time to understand why it is that people buy things, it will open up a whole new world of understanding to you. It will make it possible for you to increase your sales volume significantly and thereby make more money.

It will also enable you to understand what has happened in every sales interview ~ even when you don’t get the order. And these same principles will improve your relationships with other business associates, and with your friends and family ~ because you’ll understand them so much better.

And what may be most important of all, you will enjoy your work much more than you ever have before. No longer will you be afflicted with stomach aches from the uncomfortable task of trying to be something you’re not. You won’t have to remake your personality or become a fast talking extrovert.

Here is the painless way to become a good salesman, to influence others, to become more in demand ~ without remaking your personality, without becoming forceful, aggressive, or eloquent. You can relax and be yourself, you can be honest and friendly, and you will be thanked by the buyer for what you have done for him.

Best wishes,
Harry Browne

Part I

Chapter 1

THIS IS YOUR WORLD

This book is about *you*.

Its only concern is with *your* life, *your* future, *your* world, *your* success. If you use the principles you are about to discover, you will obtain more of what *you* want in life ~ because these principles are taken from the real world, the world in which *you* live.

There is nothing mysterious about success or failure. What happens in this world can be understood because nothing happens without a reason. All that is necessary is to find the reasons why things happen.

Did you ever notice that when you drop a glass on a hard floor it breaks? Of course. And the reason is obvious: there are physical laws at work ~ the laws of gravity and force. You could no more expect to change these laws than you would expect to fly. So it is not surprising to you when a falling glass breaks.

In the same way, there are laws of human nature. And these laws explain the actions of human beings. They take the mystery out of life and make it possible for you to understand, to plan, to succeed.

In this book, we will look at the human beings around you so that you can understand them ~ so that you will know the reasons why they act as they do ~ so that you can act in ways that will inspire them to want to help you succeed.

We will also look at you. We will find the talents you possess that other people will willingly pay for. We will establish a method by which you can start *right where you are now* to improve your life, to get more of what you want, to earn a larger income, to earn the respect of others, to begin moving toward the goals that have always escaped you.

We will be talking mainly about the economic aspects of your life ~ earning more money, moving ahead faster, obtaining the material things you want. And yet,

at the same time, you will see that these principles apply to your personal life, too ~ your relations with friends and family, everything.

I am not going to tell you that you can improve your life “if you just *believe* you can.” Success does not come from putting your trust in an idea that has not been proven to you. It comes instead from proving to yourself that only one course of action could possibly be the right way.

In short, I am asking you to think. I am *not* asking you to let me do your thinking for you. I am asking you to use your own mind.

If this seems too hard or too much for you, it is only because you’ve never tried. I’m *not* going to tell you “you can do it” ~ I’m going to *prove* it to you right now.

Are you ready to find out if you’re capable of a more successful life? All you need to do to find out is to read the next 7 chapters ~ none of which will be harder to understand than what you’ve already read.

Read these chapters straight through from chapter 1 to chapter 7. Then stop and see if you understand yourself and the people around you much more clearly than you did before. See if you now have a much better understanding of why some individuals succeed and others don’t. Then read the remaining chapters. And ask yourself if it is possible that you can be one of those who succeed ~ now that you know how it happens.

You have only one life; and no one else will live it for you. Shouldn’t you take the time right now to figure out what that life is all about?

Isn’t it time to stop the daily merry-go-round long enough to determine who you are and where you’re going and how you intend to get there?

Isn’t *your future* worth it?

Chapter 2

THE STORY OF LIFE

Where do we begin?

We begin with the only person you can be sure of: yourself.

Perhaps you have felt at times that you don't even fully understand yourself. That's not surprising; most individuals feel that way at times. And yet, you actually know far more about yourself than you may realize. Let's take that knowledge, organize it properly, and use it.

First, have you ever noticed that there are some foods you enjoy eating and some that you don't enjoy?

Of course you have ~ what a foolish question! But now ask yourself a second question:

Why do you enjoy some food more than others?

Again, foolish question ~ because some taste better than others. But how do you *know* that one tastes better than others? How do you judge what tastes best? And why doesn't everyone else always agree with your decision?

In fact, isn't this true about everything you enjoy in life? Some things are "good" and some are "bad" ~ and yet there doesn't seem to be any general agreement among people as to which are which. You enjoy some things very much; yet others may not like them at all.

What is it that tells you that something is "good"?

It is *your mind*, of course; but it has a special way of telling you. When you enjoy something, you experience a *feeling of well-being*.

And when something displeases you, you get a feeling of discomfort.

This vague, hard-to-define feeling of well-being is the most important thing in your life. It tells you what you like and what you don't like; and it thereby directs your actions and your decisions.

Perhaps biologists can explain how this "feeling" is created physically by the brain. But it really isn't important to know *how* this happens. It takes place. You know it does. You've experienced it. And you've experienced its opposite.

But what *is* this feeling?

For want of a better word, we call it *happiness*. Let's define it precisely, so that you'll know exactly what I mean by it when I use the word:

Happiness is the mental feeling of well-being.

Happiness is *not* a warm blanket or a good movie or a delicious dinner. Happiness is the feeling of well-being you receive inside yourself ~ and that may come from a warm blanket or a good movie or a delicious dinner.

And when you stop to think about it, you realize *that everything you do is for the purpose of bringing about happiness.*

When you do anything, you are expecting (or hoping) that it will bring you that feeling of well-being we call happiness. Or you are simply trying to avoid the feeling of discomfort we call unhappiness.

Have you ever thought about that? Every act you've ever taken has been for the purpose of giving you happiness.

Now there certainly must be exceptions to such a statement. For example, you might say: "Just the other day, I did a good deed for a friend; and my object was *his* happiness, not mine. Isn't that an exception?"

Not when you think it out. Go back and re-examine your own actions. If he enjoyed the deed, didn't that give *you* that feeling of well-being? And if, for some reason, the deed was *not* enjoyed, didn't you find yourself deprived of that feeling of well-being?

And, once having seen the opportunity to perform this deed, isn't it true that you would have felt uncomfortable thereafter if you had *not* performed the deed?

This is what happens every time you act. You are, consciously or unconsciously, seeking the feeling of well-being we call happiness. It is that feeling,

or lack of it, that tells you whether or not you enjoy something. It tells you which foods “taste good” and which friends you enjoy being with.

The hope for happiness motivates your every decision. Some decisions are made to bring a certain amount of happiness to you *right now*. Others are made with a long-term objective in mind. You may even put up with a certain unhappiness in the immediate future ~ but only because you expect that this investment will bring you much greater happiness in the long run.

Now, of what value is this brief self-examination?

Plenty! Because by understanding your own happiness-seeking nature, you understand other people too. *Others are also seeking happiness.*

Each individual you meet in life is making *his* decisions in order to bring about happiness in *his* life. In fact, this is our first law of human nature:

All individuals seek happiness.

Early in life, each human being comes to recognize that feeling of well-being we call happiness. He realizes that there are times when he feels comfortable and times when he feels uncomfortable.

He notices that there are certain acts and conditions that give him the feeling of well-being ~ and other acts and conditions that cause him discomfort. And so he directs his life toward establishing the conditions that give him well-being.

He, too, distinguishes between foods that taste “good” and foods that taste “bad” ~ just as you do. In other ways, he senses the difference between situations that create happiness and those that bring unhappiness.

He knows that he feels better when his bills are all paid and he has \$50 in his pocket ~ better than when he has no money at all.

He knows which individuals he enjoys being with and which make him feel uncomfortable ~ so he moves toward those he enjoys.

But is *every* act aimed at happiness for the individual?

What about the man who gives up a million-dollar fortune to become a degenerate bum? Is *he* seeking happiness? Of course. Perhaps he can’t stand the responsibility of having a million dollars and feels he will find happiness in the carefree life of a bum. But, whatever his reasons, he expects to find happiness at the end of his act.

It is impossible for our minds to conceive of a reason for any individual's actions ~ except that he *thinks* it will bring him happiness. He scratches his ear ~ to relieve the *discomfort* of an itch. He chooses a job ~ in terms of what he feels will bring him the greatest over-all happiness. He may expect that to come from the money he'll earn, from the approval of his wife, or from a lack of pressure in his work.

One individual may give up his life for another ~ because he feels that living without that other person will bring only unhappiness.

Not every act *brings* happiness. Individuals make mistakes. But every act is *aimed* at bringing happiness.

Each Life Is Different

All individuals have one common characteristic: each one seeks happiness. Beyond that, every individual is different. Each has lived a different life. Each has a different background, a different level of knowledge.

So each person will experience happiness in different ways. For example, one man may find happiness in reading good books. Another enjoys providing happiness for others ~ or possibly even providing unhappiness for others!

For some men, spending a million dollars would be sheer ecstasy ~ while other men find that it is the *earning* of a million dollars that provides happiness.

Some individuals live a life of self-denial here on Earth, anticipating a reward of eternal happiness in the Kingdom of Heaven.

What does all this mean?

It simply means that *happiness is relative*.

Each individual will have a different set of values. Each will look for, and obtain, happiness in a different way. What gives one person a feeling of well-being may have no effect whatsoever upon another ~ or may even create extreme discomfort.

Each person chooses for himself what he wants in life.

If someone does something that seems to you to have no value, it's only that he has made a choice in accordance with what *he* wants ~ *not* with what *you* want.

And this is our second law of human nature, a very important one:

Happiness is relative.

There is no single thing that would bring happiness to all people. The happiness an object will bring can only be determined by each individual separately.

This gives us two specific laws of human nature to keep in mind: all individuals seek happiness and happiness is relative. But there is one more law we must recognize before we proceed further.

Each individual has only a limited amount of time, energy, knowledge or property. These are his *resources* ~ and there is really a shortage of each of them.

An individual has only so many years to live. He must do all he wants to do in life within those years. He has only so many hours in the day to use to obtain what he wants. And he has only a certain amount of energy and knowledge.

He uses his time, energy and knowledge to create property ~ or he trades his time and energy to others for the property they give him. His property consists of his possessions and the money he can use to buy other possessions.

So his time, energy and property ~ his resources ~ are always limited. And yet he can think of enough enjoyable things to fill up many lifetimes. He knows that he can never work hard enough to earn them all, nor will he live long enough to have them all.

This means he must *choose*. He must choose between the various alternatives he can see ~ in order to make the most of the time and energy he does have. He chooses constantly in order to bring as much happiness as possible, while using up as little time and energy as possible.

Does this mean that everyone is lazy? No, not in the sense that word is generally used. It only means that no one has enough time and energy to do everything he would like to do. So he chooses the courses of action that will use up as little time and energy as possible.

This, then, is our third law of human nature:

Resources are limited.

And since they are, a man will use his resources in ways that will bring him the most happiness.

In short, he chooses.

And because he must choose, he has *values*.

A value is simply the amount of happiness an individual expects will come from an object or an idea. One thing is of greater value than another because the individual believes he will obtain more happiness from the one than the other.

He automatically values some things more than others ~ *because he can't have all of them*.

Every individual has values. But each individual's values are different from those of other people. In fact, it is often hard to understand the values of other people. The man who appears to take no interest in anything still has values. He values what we would think of as "boredom" more than exercising mental and physical energy to obtain other things.

This, then, is the story of life: each individual seeks happiness. His concept of what will bring him happiness will differ from that of every other human being; happiness will be relative to him. His resources (time, energy, knowledge and property) are limited; so he must choose constantly between the many alternative courses of action he sees. And he does this by placing values on everything he sees. These values lead him to prefer one thing more than another.

Now take another look at the people around you. Do they take on a new light in view of what we've just recognized? Each one of these human beings is seeking his own happiness ~ and he is doing it in a way that is uniquely his own. He seeks to live his life as *he* want it. He is not living for you ~ or for me ~ but for himself.

But they are the keys to a higher income for you, better relations with your friends, your family, your business associates.

Let's look further and see what this means in *your* life. . .

Chapter 3

HOW MEN PROFIT

If you lived on a desert island by yourself, the secret of success would be pretty obvious: use your limited resources in ways that will bring you the most happiness.

But here in civilization you are constantly involved with other people. This means you must take into consideration what other people will do for you, to you, with you, against you, because of you, in spite of you, etc.

You might think that you are very self-sufficient. But look around you right now at all of the things you are enjoying. How many of them did you make completely by yourself? Probably none of them. You obtain things in exchange from other people. And this is why you must be concerned with their actions and desires.

So let us identify what happens in the interaction between two human beings.

The first thing to do is to recognize the concept of *profit*.

What *is* profit?

Profit is the increase in happiness by replacing one situation with another. This identifies the nature of profit ~ the giving up of one thing for something that provides greater happiness.

An individual may discover a new way of doing something that gives him more happiness than he received from the old way. So he gives up the old way and adopts the new way because he values the new way more. He profits.

Or he may make an exchange with another person, in which he will give up one thing for something else he values more.

The essential nature of profit is the *increase* or the *surplus*. One value is given up in exchange for a *greater* value. We see this clearly in a business. The

businessman pays out expenses in exchange for the sales revenue he receives. If he takes in more than he paid out, we say he has made a profit ~ an increase in what will bring him happiness.

This applies in the same way to each individual in each situation. He is attempting to trade some of his limited resources for something that will give him *more* happiness. If he has acted wisely he succeeds. If not, he loses ~ in which case, he will try to be more efficient next time.

Let's look at the different ways in which an individual may profit.

When a car salesman exchanges a new car for \$3,000 he profits ~ because he values the \$3,000 more than the car. He would rather have the \$3,000 than the car, so he willingly makes the exchange.

But at the same time, when a car *buyer* exchanges \$3,000 for a new car, he profits too ~ because *he* values the car more than the \$3,000. He would rather have the car than the \$3,000; so he willingly gives up the money for the car.

Of course, he'd probably prefer to have *both* the \$3,000 *and* the car. But his resources are limited, he can only have one or the other. So he *chooses* in accordance with his *values*. And he decides he will obtain more happiness from having the car than from keeping the \$3,000 in the bank or spending it on anything else. He profits by using his limited resources to increase his happiness.

In the same way, you profit when you give up time and energy in exchange for your income. You value the money you earn (and what you will use it for) more than anything else you could obtain from the time and energy.

A housewife profits when she receives a product of greater value (in her eyes) than the price she must pay for it.

In each of these cases, the individual has acted to increase his own happiness ~ by giving up something of greater value.

Even the individual who loaf is profiting ~ in terms of *his* values. He gives up the money he could be earning because he values leisure more.

So profit can come in many different ways: through money, knowledge, contentment, spiritual understanding, leisure, etc.. In each case, it is what increases the individual's happiness.

In the last chapter, we saw that each individual uses his limited resources in ways aimed at bringing maximum happiness ~ as *he* understands what will bring him

happiness. Now, with our definition of profit as an increase in happiness, we can sum up all of it in one simple sentence:

All individuals seek profit ~ of one kind or another.

. . .which means that each individual is seeking to increase his own happiness ~ in whatever way he believes he can.

This, again, is a recognition of the fact that each human being is doing what *he* wants to do with his own limited resources.

This doesn't mean that the individual can't imagine a happier life for himself. But in terms of the resources he has, and the alternatives available to him, he is doing what *he* wants to do.

For one man, this may mean working to earn a million dollars and then spending it lavishly. For another man, it may be to satisfy his "humanitarian" desires by doing "good work" for others. But, in any case, it is what the individual *wants* to do by his own standards.

Even if an individual likes to pose as a "martyr" (one who is sacrificing for others), he is still doing that because he *wants* to. In fact, just prevent him from "sacrificing" and see how unhappy that makes him!

Each individual is doing what he wants to do.

The first step in trying to get along with other people is to realize that each is doing what *he* wants to do. Examine his actions, uncover the motives for his acts, find out *why* he wants to do as he does. And, as we'll see further along, this will give you the opportunity to earn his respect and cooperation to an extent that others can never obtain.

Two People Seeking Profit

Since you are not alone in this world, it is obvious that other people ~ as well as you ~ are seeking their own profits. That creates problems, doesn't it? Won't the two of you run into each other, get into each other's way, create a dog-eat-dog battle?

There's an old saying that "one man's gain must be another man's loss." Many people take that old adage for granted as the whole truth. And yet, *it is totally false.*

Why?

Because happiness is relative. And what pleases one person is not necessarily going to please the next person. This means that two individuals ~ with different values ~ can arrange an exchange between them that will satisfy *both* of them. Neither has to triumph over the other one. Both can gain.

For example, we saw that the car *buyer* profits just as much as the car *salesman*. Each has given up something of one value for something he considers to be of greater value. Neither one had to be sacrificed for the other.

Suppose, though, that happiness were *not* relative ~ that everyone had exactly the same values. Obviously, they could not exchange under those conditions. For one of them would have what both of them value the most. And the other would have what both of them value the least. The only way any change could take place would be for one of the two to steal from the other one.

But, happily, life is not that way. Everyone has different values. This means that as long as two individuals *voluntarily* enter an exchange together, *both* can profit.

Because happiness is relative, mutually-profitable exchanges are possible.

Both the car buyer and the car salesman profit when they exchange ~ because each has increased his happiness, according to his own standards.

You can't really call this an "equal exchange." For neither of the two parties thought of it as an equal exchange. Each one considered it to be an unequal exchange ~ in *his* favor. Each one gave up one thing for something of *greater* value ~ not something of equal value.

Each one profits; and this points up the fact that *there are at least two profits in every exchange*. Sometimes there are more than two ~ either because there are more than two parties or because other individuals will benefit indirectly.

But there are always *at least* two profits in every sale.

What about a "disaster sale"? Suppose the car dealer paid \$3,500 originally for the car, tried to sell it at \$4,000 and now has marked the price down to \$3,000. Can we say that he profited when the car is sold for \$3,000?

Of course. He has decided it would be of greater value to him to sell the car at less than what it cost him originally ~ rather than keep the car forever with a higher price tag on it. Naturally, he would have preferred to sell it for \$4,000; but he knows now that he can't. In fact, he would have preferred to sell it for \$10,000! But he knows he can't do that either.

He must now decide between (1) selling it at \$3,000 or (2) keeping it on the lot with an unrealistic price tag on it. He willingly gives up the second alternative because he values the first more. So if he succeeds in selling it at \$3,000, he profits in terms of his present values. Selling it will make him happier than keeping it.

Again, we must recognize that both the car buyer and the car seller are doing what they want to do ~ within the range of alternatives available to them. No matter what either might say later, nor what others might say, each of them is doing what he wants to do.

The car buyer may dream of buying luxury cars for \$100 apiece and the car salesman may wish to sell cars at \$10,000 each. But in the terms of what is *possible*, each is doing what he wants to do. This is vitally important to keep in mind.

For there is one basic misconception at the root of all mistakes made in analyzing human nature. And that is to believe that an individual is *not* doing what he wants to do. This is vitally important to keep in mind.

This is the “universal fallacy” ~ which means the misconception that is always at the root of every mistake.

The universal fallacy is the belief that an individual would willingly accept something unprofitable to himself.

No individual will give up some of his own resources for something he values *less*. When you think he will, you’re headed for failure. He may very well make an exchange that *you* would never make ~ but he will not *willingly* make an exchange that will lower *his* values.

For example, you observe a man buying an item in a store for \$2. You know that he can buy the same item at another store for only \$1. Is he doing something unprofitable to himself?

Of course not. Perhaps he prefers the convenience of this store or the service he receives here or he admires the pretty sales girl. Whatever his reason, it is strong enough to make him quite willing to give up an extra dollar for the value he received here (value which he *doesn’t* get at the other store).

To believe that this man is intentionally doing something unprofitable to himself is to practice the universal fallacy. And it’s not hard to do. You see examples of it every day. Some are obvious; others are very subtle.

For example, a discourteous sales clerk practices the universal fallacy ~ believing that customers will continue to come to the store, despite the discourtesy that makes it unprofitable for people to do so.

A very subtle example of the universal fallacy is this kind of statement ~ which you hear often, in one form or another:

“If the government didn’t regulate the economy, General Motors would double its prices.”

Where’s the fallacy in this statement? It is, of course, in the belief that the customer would pay anything that General Motors asked ~ no matter how unprofitable to the customer. It assumes that GM could price Chevrolets at \$6,000 and continue to sell as many as it does today. And this, of course, just isn’t true.

The customer’s resources are limited. So he has to give up something in order to get his Chevrolet. And beyond a certain price, he has to give up more than the car is worth to him. At that point, he doesn’t buy ~ no matter how strongly GM might try to justify its price increase.

A little further along, we’ll see how this “universal fallacy” is the cause of failure. But for now, let’s simply resolve to never make the mistake of thinking that people somehow *willingly* do other than what they want to do. Such a thing is not possible.

You can never abolish the profit-seeking nature of human beings. It always exists. Each individual wants to live his own life according to *his* values (whatever they may be), not someone else’s. Even if you physically block his way, you do not stop him from seeking happiness; you only make it more difficult for him.

Each individual will do what *he* wants to do. And with that realization, we can proceed to what *you* have to do to get what *you* want. . .

Chapter 4

HOW MEN SUCCEED

If someone has something you think would profit you, how do you go about getting it? What do you have to do to profit in an exchange.

Let's take some examples in order to find out:

Suppose someone has a piece of property you'd like to own, how do you get it from him? We will leave the possibility of stealing to a later chapter and consider only voluntary exchanges. That leaves us with only one method: you must offer the owner something in exchange that *he* values *more* than the property.

If you want to work for a particular employer, how do you get the job? By offering time and effort and talent that are of greater value to the employer than the money he will have to pay you.

And how would you go about getting someone you like to spend some of his time with you? Obviously, you'll have to make the idea of spending time with you more attractive to that person than any of the other alternatives he'll have to give up.

Lastly, if you're a businessman, how do you make sales? Naturally, you have to offer the customer something he wants more than the money you're asking him to give up.

What do all four of these cases have in common?

In each one, you've had to offer someone else something that is in *his* self-interest ~ a method by which he can profit. Otherwise, he will not agree to the exchange. Why not? Because no one *has* to buy. The individual will buy only if he wants to. And he'll want to if it is profitable to him.

If the exchange will be profitable to you, but not to him, there will be no exchange.

To get something, you have to give up something in exchange that is wanted or needed by the other person. It has to be of greater value to him than the object you are asking him to give up.

So how, then, do you obtain profit in an exchange?

Profit is a reward for satisfying the desire of someone else.

If you could produce everything you want in this world all by yourself, you'd have no reason to satisfy others. But since there are things you desire, but can't produce, you are in the position of having to satisfy others in order to obtain what you want.

In fact, you personally produce far less than 1% of all the things you want in life; the rest must be obtained in exchange from others. So you are dependent upon this "need to satisfy the desires of others" in order to get what you want. You're going to have to make *other people* happy in order to obtain the things that will make *you* happy.

Obvious? Yes ~ but notice how many people around you overlook this simple fact. Most people are indifferent to the needs and desires of others ~ failing to recognize that those desires are their own stepping-stones to success.

And we are laying here the first important building block in the solid, certain foundation we are creating for seeking success in the real world.

Now let's extend this to its logical conclusion. If profit is a reward for satisfying the desires of others, then the *more* you satisfy those desires, the *more* you will profit.

The extent of your own profit depends upon your ability to satisfy the needs and desires of others.

The more efficient you are in satisfying those desires, the bigger your own profits will be.

This standard of measurement applies to *your* life ~ no matter what the nature of the profit you seek ~ whether or not you choose to recognize it. You are continually in the position of having to satisfy others in order to get what you want ~ whether you are buying or selling, employer or employee, lender or borrower, parent or child, lover or friend.

F. Leroy Hill, a successful manufacturer, summed up monetary profits in this way: "Profits are a measure of the service you render."

This means your balance sheet is an indication of how much you have served others ~ in terms of *their* standards, *their* values, *their* desires. Don't ever forget that happiness is relative. Your idea of what's good for someone else may not be shared in the slightest by that someone.

Understand, too, that I am *not* saying you *ought* to be considerate of others or that it is ethical to make people happy. It is a simple fact of life that if you do not make people happy, they aren't going to do business with you ~ on *any* basis.

You don't *have* to satisfy the desires of other individuals. Then again, neither do you *have* to be a success. Nor do you even have to eat ~ unless, of course, you want to survive.

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Chapter 5

WHOM MUST YOU PLEASE?

We have begun the quest for success by recognizing certain facts of life about the real world in which we live. We saw that each individual is pursuing happiness (the feeling of well-being); that each individual's concept of what will bring him happiness is different; and that the resources available to him are limited.

Because resources are limited, the individual must place values on objects and choose between them. He then profits by giving up something of one value for something else of greater value to him. And since he will only enter exchanges in which he believes he will profit, each exchange contains two profits.

You obtain your profit in return for providing profits to others ~ for having satisfied *their* needs and desires. The more efficient you are in satisfying the desires of others, the more profit you will make.

Before we can formulate a specific rule for success, we must continue looking at the world around us, recognizing the nature of life. For any "secret of success" must be based upon an understanding of the way the real world is.

So now let's look at how all of the various individual exchanges add up to what we call "the marketplace" or, more simply, "the market."

And as we view the actions of many people, let us keep in mind that we're still talking about the actions of individual human beings ~ each with his own life and his own relative view of happiness.

It is very easy to fall into the trap of talking about "society" as if it were one great being with its own mind, its own values, and its own happiness-seeking nature. But society is nothing of the sort. Society has no mind, no heart, no profit motive.

Society is simply a group of individual human beings. And each of those human beings has his own mind, his own values, and individuals within a given society will differ on many, many matters (happiness being relative). "Society" is a

word used to describe a gathering of various individuals who have one thing in common (usually they live in the same general area).

There is nothing greater in this world than the individual. For only individuals can think and act. Groups are only a number of individuals who exchange with one another. Therefore, we must never confuse ourselves by thinking in terms of group actions when we really mean the actions of the individuals *within* that group.

The Purpose of it All

As we look mentally at this huge gathering of individuals in the marketplace ~ buying, selling, producing, etc. ~ we seem to see nothing but chaos. And we wonder if there is any purpose to it. How do you make sense out of it?

It is easy to understand the fact that one individual is seeking his own happiness. And he works and exchanges in ways that obtain for him the things he feels will bring him happiness.

And, actually, that is what everyone in the marketplace is doing ~ simply pursuing his own happiness. But individuals enter the marketplace in two different roles ~ as *consumer* and *producer*. Let's understand the differences between the two roles:

Consumption is the act of using a product or service for the happiness it brings you directly. You consume a product by using it. In the process you use it up. You are a consumer of food, of automobiles, of music, of recreation, of leisure, of many things that bring you happiness.

Production is the performance of a service that will make it possible to have something to consume. You may perform that service for yourself or for others. You are a producer when you work for a company, when you sell products, when you make a sandwich, when you mow someone's lawn, when you repair something.

All of these acts are designed to provide something for someone's consumption. In short, production is the act of making something; consumption is the act of using and enjoying it.

Some products are not made to be consumed, however. They are *capital goods* ~ which are products or services that make it possible to produce other things (tools are capital goods, for example). *Consumer goods* are items we use and enjoy for their own sake (such as food, recreation, clothes, etc.). But even capital goods are only produced to make it easier to produce consumer goods.

Since happiness is the object, the only reason anyone ever produces *anything* is in order to make it possible to have something to consume. Consumption, not production, is always the purpose.

You never produce merely for the sake of producing; you produce in order to have the consumption benefits of the items produced. If you like to make things (without using them), then recognize that you are producing for the *enjoyment* this gives you ~ a form of consumption.

If we lived in paradise, we would not have to produce anything. All we'd do is consume whatever we wanted. But since we are living in the real world, we are required to produce in order to have anything to consume.

Everyone is a consumer. Practically all of us are producers, also. But our ultimate decisions are made as consumers ~ what is it we want in order to be happy?

As consumers we give up resources to producers in order to get what they produce. So producers spend their time trying to provide the items that consumers want.

And that's what's going on in that big complicated thing we call the marketplace. Each individual is acting in his role as producer to provide something of value to consumers in exchange for the prices they are willing to pay.

Even long, involved production processes are just methods that producers have discovered to provide the best value to the consumers ~ in order to make greater profits.

We can understand this even better if we take a little journey . . .

The Desert Island

Let's suppose you were stranded on a desert island. With no other individuals with whom to exchange, certain facts of life would be much clearer to you.

You would know, for example, that you'll only be able to consume what you first produce. And you'd know that your resources are limited. There is only so much you can do with your limited time, energy and knowledge ~ so you must choose.

You'd like to go swimming; but you know that you must take the time to arrange shelter for yourself and to find food and take care of your most urgent needs. So you automatically create a value scale for yourself ~ consciously or unconsciously. The most important things come first and so on down the list.

You may eventually go swimming; but only after you are sure that it will not be at the expense of having food and shelter.

You develop a routine for yourself ~ which includes your daily activity and your plans for the future. We call this routine your profit motive ~ the method by which you intend to obtain your happiness.

And you know that if some new activity occurs to you, you can only add it to your routine by giving up something else (even if that something else is leisure). So anything new must be of greater value than something you're already doing; for you will only change your routine in order to get something of greater value to you. That's the concept of profit at work again.

You are continually choosing ~ making value judgments ~ choosing between the alternatives available to you. And, of course, the object is always to make your life as happy as possible ~ to satisfy your own values.

Now let's suppose that there is another person on the island with you. Each of you has his own property and each of you is producing for yourself what you want to consume.

But pretty soon you find you are a better producer of some things and he is a better producer of other things. And, because of your differing values, you can make exchanges between you that will improve the position of each of you. You come to the point where you say, "I'll give you this in exchange for that." And what you're offering is the price you're willing to pay to get what you want.

So you make exchanges of some of your surpluses. But you will still *choose* in each exchange. You will not automatically give up what you have produced simply because he wants to trade. You will evaluate what he offers in terms of what you will have to give up in order to get it.

In the process, then, each of you will decide to spend time producing items that the other person values highly. You won't spend time producing items for exchange that the other person doesn't value much ~ because you would get very little in exchange for your efforts, no matter how long it took you to produce the products involved.

And in this isolated situation we can see an important point: *It is not how long you work at some task that determines what you'll receive for it in exchange.* It is the value *someone else* places upon the product or service that determines what it is worth in exchange.

Your “costs” are not important to the other person. He only cares about the value of the product to himself. What he’ll pay to get your service is based solely on the value *he* places upon the object.

And so each of you will, by trial and error, move toward production of that which the other values the highest. Naturally, for your *own* consumption, you will produce what you value most, considering the effort involved.

Meanwhile, back at civilization, the same principles are at work. Here, however, each of us produces practically nothing for his own consumption. Instead, each person specializes in a certain function and trades the product of his effort for the things he wants.

This is called the “specialization of labor” ~ as each person specializes and becomes efficient at functions that others value highly. As a result, each of us has more than if each was producing solely for his own consumption.

But here the “desert island” principles are still at work. First, all resources are limited. You are still limited by the life span, the hours in the day, the efforts you can expend, the amount of your knowledge.

And so you choose constantly ~ choosing between the various alternatives available to you. And in the same way that your choices helped determine what your fellow man would produce on the desert island, so will your choices direct production here in civilization.

As you demonstrate what you are willing to give up for the things you want, you are actually steering production into certain channels, geared toward *your* consumption. Producers will only spend their time producing items they think will bring a profitable price in the marketplace.

It is the consumer who makes the ultimate decisions as to what will be produced; for it is the consumer who will eventually use the products made and he will only pay for what he wants.

Don’t forget your role as producer. Anytime you offer someone else something in the marketplace, you are a producer. You may be offering a service, friendship, love or can-openers. You can be a manufacturer, a retailer, a wage-earner, a salesman or even a housewife who makes her husband’s work easier. In any of these capacities, you are acting as a producer.

You do not have to deal directly with the consumer who will use the service you provide. In fact, you may help to make something that in turn will make

something else that will help to make a product that the consumer will buy. This indirect method of production does not change anything.

No matter how long the production line, there is a consumer down at the end of it who is the object of the whole process. He is the one being asked to pay for all of the production. So it is *his* approval that counts.

So everything you do as a producer must be aimed at pleasing the ultimate consumer. For if he doesn't buy, you will not receive anything for your efforts for very long.

It is not how much time, energy or talent you put into your service, it is the value the consumer places upon it that matters. For he will only pay for it to the extent that he values it.

The consumer (the one who will use what you are offering) is the man you must please.

Expressing Consumer Desires

If your success depends upon satisfying the desires of consumers, then it is important to be able to interpret those desires. For people want *many* things ~ but because they live in the real world, not Utopia, they will not get everything they want with their limited resources.

The consumer will choose and you must understand how he expresses his choices.

He has to choose between playing golf and getting the lawn mowed; between a new yacht and three meals a day; between a new car and more leisure time. He must choose constantly.

But how does he express his decision? You can ask an individual if he would like to have a new yacht, for instance, and he will probably say, "Of course!" But does that mean he is a prospect for a new yacht? Not necessarily. Because he may have many other demands for which he urgently needs his limited resources.

He may even make enough money in one year to buy a yacht; but he's not willing to give up eating and driving and other needs in order to buy the yacht.

And so we come upon a factor that can cause confusion: the *degree* of desire. He wants a yacht; but *how much* does he want a yacht? And just how can you compare his desire for a yacht with other objects?

How do you measure the *degree* of desire?

The individual expresses the degree of desire for an object in the price he is willing to pay.

Now we have translated what was a vague desire into a very tangible factor that can be seen, considered and acted upon.

For example, suppose the consumer decides he needs a new coat. Because of more urgent needs, he has decided he can only spend \$30. If the coat is priced at \$35, he will not buy. Adequate food is more important for the extra \$5 than a new coat ~ and he expresses this through the price he is willing to pay.

Another “desert island” principle must be recognized: anything the consumer *adds* to his routine must be at the expense of something else that will be given up. So if you look at another individual and say, “My goodness, that man really ought to own a coat,” just remember that the only way he can obtain that coat is to *give up* something he possesses now and has already considered to be of greater value to him than owning a coat.

If you were to pass a law requiring everyone to own a coat, for instance, you would simply be forcing him to give up something he values more than a coat. You would not be improving his situation. In *his* eyes, you would be lowering his standard of living.

This same principle applies in personal relations. If you want to please people, you cannot impose your own values upon them. You first want to know what it is that will please them the most. And, again each individual expresses the degree of desire for an object in the price he is willing to pay in time, energy and devotion.

So an individual tells you what pleases him most when he shows you how much of his resources he is willing to give up in order to get various things.

Later in this book, we will look at methods for uncovering the prices that individual will pay to get the things they want.

For now, however, let’s recognize that each individual is already using his resources in ways that, to his knowledge, will bring him the maximum happiness possible. That may include more leisure and less material goods than others choose, for example ~ but it’s what *he* wants to do. He may not have carefully thought out his plans and values; but that, too, is only because he prefers to live his life that way.

So when you approach any individual, make sure you realize that he will do what he wants to do. Don't laugh at his choices; investigate them to better understand what he's trying to accomplish.

If you wish to trade, you will have to offer the person something *he* wants more than what he has already. It's *his* resources you are seeking. He will control their use. You will have to be in tune with his desires or there will be no exchange.

The consumer is the object of the whole process. And he chooses in terms that are meaningful to him (not to you). You will succeed only as you find ways to satisfy *him*.

Chapter 6

WHAT ARE YOU SELLING?

In daily conversation, we refer to “the price of a book” or we say that someone “is selling automobiles.” This is a convenient way of referring to what is taking place; but it is important to success to understand exactly what is being bought and sold.

For all we ever exchange between us is *human services*. That’s right ~ when people refer to the “price of steel”, they are really referring to the sum total of the prices of various human services that go into producing steel.

Stop and think about it: did you ever give money to a piece of steel? Or to a building? Or to a plot of land? Of course not. Every payment you’ve ever made has been to a human being.

When you purchase a product in a store, what are you paying for? Obviously, *you* are paying for the happiness you seek; but the price you pay is the sum total of the prices of all the human services that went into the production and distribution of that product.

The retailer, for instance, receives part of the price as his reward for getting the product to you. Without his service, there would have been no way to get the product in your hands. He has gone to the trouble to keep a supply on hand locally ~ where you can go and look at it and decide to buy it.

He also pays part of what he receives to his employees ~ because he has decided it is more profitable to pay for their services than to go without them.

At the same time, he depends upon the wholesaler to keep a handy inventory of this and other products available. And so the retailer pays part of the price he receives to the wholesaler for providing that service. If he thought he could get along *without* the wholesaler, he’d perform that function for himself and keep that part of the price.

The manufacturer also receives a share of the price. He, of course, promptly passes on part of it to the various individuals whose services helped produce the product.

He also pays part of the price to the suppliers who provide him with parts and materials. But those suppliers merely redistribute most of their shares, just as the manufacturer did.

Finally, you get down to the cost of “materials” ~ the metals or other natural resources from which the products are made. But does this mean that part of the price of the product then goes to a piece of iron?

Of course not. That part of the price goes to the *human beings* who brought the iron from the ground, processed it, and took it to the manufacturer. And that also includes the individual who was smart enough to realize that it might be useful to go to the trouble to bring the resource out of the ground.

Even “rent” is a price paid to a human being for the privilege of using his land.

What about monetary profits? Are they any different? No. Profit to the investor means payment to him for being willing to give up his purchases and allow someone else to use his money. It is also payment for the risk he takes (his money might not be returned to him). This means that the investor also serves as a kind of evaluator, judging in advance the merit of the enterprise. He won’t allow his money to be used unless he’s satisfied the enterprise will succeed. So the payment to him includes payment for his judgment.

And, too, there is the entrepreneur. He is the man who starts an enterprise ~ and often manages it, too. He receives part of the purchase price. He is being paid for his service in bringing together all of the other human services in a unique way for the purpose of providing a specific service to you.

The entrepreneur is basically a calculator. He is rewarded for his ability to figure out what you’ll want, when you’ll want it, and how much you’re willing to pay to get it. If he succeeds, it is because he has made available for you something you want ~ rather than offering you something you don’t want.

Every time you write a check ~ or pay cash ~ for *anything*, the money you pay will eventually be split up among human beings. All we ever exchange between us are human services and products created by human services.

This means that everyone in the marketplace is in the same position ~ whether he is a wage-earner, entrepreneur, investor, landlord, salesman, housewife. Each is offering his time, energy and talent toward making something available for

consumption. So his reward will be determined by the importance of his service in providing the consumer with what he wants.

The consumer is the ultimate judge. Along the way to the consumer, others will evaluate *your* ability to help them offer something to the consumer that will be profitable. It doesn't matter what your job may be ~ movie star, Wall Street financier, factory worker, bookkeeper, typist ~ you will be rewarded only as you provide something that the consumer wants and is willing to pay for.

So the price of your service is going to depend upon one factor alone ~ *the value others place upon it.*

There's no way to avoid this. Just as every payment you make goes eventually to a human being, it is also true that every payment you receive *comes* from a human being. And that human being, whoever he may be, is seeking happiness ~ *his* happiness ~ and will look at you only in terms of the happiness you may help him obtain.

If you decide that your services are worth more than others are willing to pay for them, the others will find a way to get along without you. You are *not* indispensable to the process. You will only be necessary to any arrangement so long as the price you ask is in harmony with the profit motives of *every* other individual involved.

No one ever *has* to buy. An individual will only buy when he considers what he will receive to be of greater value than what he will give up.

Each person continually evaluates the alternatives available to him. He doesn't have to accept anyone else's opinion. He keeps choosing ~ choosing how to make the most of his limited resources. Choosing means placing relative values on everything he sees ~ on objects, on services and on *people*.

He will associate with those individuals who enhance his happiness. He will buy from those individuals who offer him a way to increase his happiness. And he will continually evaluate all alternatives to these courses of action.

And it is so easy to overlook the simple fact *that everyone you deal with is evaluating you.* Everyone is evaluating your ability to help him get what *he* wants.

Look about you ~ at your friends, your family, your employer, your business associates, your customers. Each of them is a world unto himself. Each is living his own life ~ not for you or for society or for anything but his own happiness.

You play a part in each of these lives only because you have in some way added to the happiness that each of these individuals enjoys. But at any time it becomes more profitable for any of these individuals to seek his happiness elsewhere, he will.

Do you need these people? Of course you do. Better than 99% of all the things you want and enjoy in life can only be obtained with the cooperation of others. So you must satisfy the profit motives of others ~ in terms of the values *they* assign ~ if you want to get your happiness.

Your success depends upon the value others place upon your services.

This applies to *everyone*. No one ever gets so rich, so independent, or so situated that he is not subject to this economic law.

It may seem that we are spending too much time laboring the obvious. But very few people *really believe* the obvious truths we are looking at. For they act continually in ways that attempt to flout these principles. They practice the universal fallacy ~ ignoring the profit motives of others.

And by tying down carefully the truth about the real world, we are now ready to spell out the precise, specific secret of success . . .

Chapter 7

THE SECRET OF SUCCESS

We have seen the nature of the market ~ the exchanges that take place between human beings.

We have seen that the consumer is the object of the whole process. This is because the only reason we ever produce anything is in order to have things to consume ~ to use and enjoy because of the happiness they provide. So the one who is meant to consume a particular item is the one who provides the ultimate judgment as to its worth.

It is the consumer's values that count. He can't have everything ~ so he expresses his relative values, his preferences, through the prices he's willing to pay.

You may not be dealing directly with the consumer. For example, you may earn a wage from an employer who sells products to other businessmen who eventually meet the consumers. But the principle remains the same. These businessmen are trying to please the consumers at low costs to themselves ~ in order to make profits for themselves.

And they, like everyone else you deal with, are evaluating *you*. They are trying to determine if you are actually helping them provide the consumer with what he wants. And, if so, is the price you're asking for your services in line with what the consumer is willing to pay? Or is there another way to accomplish the same service for less than the amount you're requesting?

In every case, your success depends upon the value others place upon your services.

People only pay for what they want ~ so you will succeed only if you are providing people with what they want.

It is surprising how few people have ever stopped to realize that. Many people *say* they realize it. But look at them. Do their actions indicate that they even care what other people want?

In fact, it is amazing how many people try to practice the universal fallacy ~ the belief that an individual would willingly do something unprofitable to himself.

These people try to “use” other people, to take advantage of them, to get everything from them and give nothing in return. Then they are surprised when people do not willingly associate with them.

Other individuals conjure up pictures of “bloated capitalists” manipulating stocks, products and human beings to suit their own purposes. These are fantasies because other individuals do not continue to participate when the “manipulators” are the only ones who profit.

No one willingly does something unless he’s decided it is his most profitable alternative. That goes for you ~ and for everyone else in this world. Unless you can demonstrate to others that your service is in their self-interest, they are not going to give up their resources to you.

If there were no shortage of human resources in this world, consumers could buy everything and have everything they wanted. Then there would be no point in wondering how to succeed.

But there is a very definite shortage ~ in that desires always far outrun resources. This, too, is something many people either ignore or try to challenge. But it is true: desires will always outrun resources. Let’s prove this:

Take a few minutes to make up a list of all the things you would *like* to have that you don’t now possess. As you start on the list, you’ll probably notice that it will take quite some time to complete it. For after all, if you’re making a list of things you would *like* to have, you could include many thousands of things.

As a matter of fact, you’ll soon come to the realization that you could never work enough hours in your entire lifetime to earn the resources to obtain everything on your list. You will never be able to satisfy all of your desires. This is why you must discriminate ~ choose ~ between these desires in terms of the resources you *do* have.

Everyone in this world is in the same position ~ his desires outrun his resources. Even the world’s wealthiest individual does not have enough resources (time, energy, knowledge and property) to do everything he *wants* to do.

So *everyone* is choosing. This means that a product will not automatically sell just because someone has taken the time to produce it. Every item produced must fit into the value scales of consumers and be the most urgent items on those value scales.

This is why you will only succeed if you are providing people with what they want for their limited resources.

So here is *half* of the secret of success: *You will succeed if you are providing people with what they want.*

But that's only half of it. Many people who realize that much *still fail*. Many people produce products they *think* people would like. Many offer services they *think* people would willingly pay for. But they find out they were wrong.

Why were they wrong? Why were they unable to tell what people wanted?

To get the answer, let's go all the way back to the second chapter. There we saw that it isn't enough to recognize that all individuals seek happiness. We must also recognize that *happiness is relative*. Each person has a different concept of what will bring him happiness.

There are billions of human beings in this world ~ and everyone of them has a different life to live. Each has his own background, level of knowledge, desires, values and standards.

And the mistake that most individuals make is in using their *own* values to determine what other people will want ~ when, in reality, those values may be vastly different from the values of the individuals who are expected to buy.

It isn't what you want that determines what other individuals will buy from you ~ it's what *they* want. And that answer can only come from them, not from you.

The individual who succeeds will be the one who provides people with what they want. But to leave it at that will mean leaving your success or failure to the whims of blind luck. You will simply be guessing what others want, hoping you will accidentally be providing it.

But just by using these principles, you can *assure* your success.

There *is* such a thing as *the secret of success* ~ there *is* a way to take your life out of the realm of luck and control your own future ~ there *is* a method by which you can obtain the things *you* want in this world.

All you have to do is to make it your business to *find out what people want* ~ instead of assuming it, instead of telling them.

The one rule that sums up the job to be done ~ the one formula that is fully in harmony with the real world ~ *the secret of success is:*

Find out what people want and help them get it!

This is the way you separate yourself from the mass of people who just “get by”. This is how you make sure that your services are always in demand. This is how you command a high price in the marketplace ~ by making sure that what you’re offering is what people really want.

You do it by taking the trouble to find out what people want *before* you determine what you will offer. You calculate in advance; but you recognize the difference between true calculation and blind guessing. Because guessing means you just transfer your own values mentally to others.

But calculation means you actually go out into the marketplace and find out what individuals want the most, how much they’re willing to pay for it ~ and *then* go to work to provide it.

Ask yourself: how much do *you* know *right now* about the specific happiness-seeking profit motives of the individuals you are expecting to pay for your services ~ your employer, your customers? Have you taken the trouble to investigate their specific plans, their road maps for seeking happiness? If not, how do you know they will buy from you tomorrow morning what they bought from you yesterday?

Are you willing to leave it all in the hands of luck?

American history contains a few examples of individuals who “just happened” to be in the right place at the right time. They accidentally provided consumers with what they wanted and so they received great fortunes. But these accidental examples are so very few and far between, the odds against it happening to you are at least 10,000,000 to 1.

On the other hand, men like Henry Ford, Thomas Edison, John D. Rockefeller, Andrew Carnegie, and others who made great fortunes did not make them accidentally. These men understood how the market works and they did not intend to leave their futures to luck.

They took the trouble to find out what people were willing to pay for and they based their decision on that and that alone. They never deceived themselves into

thinking an individual might buy something he didn't really want. They never figured that they could always sell their mistakes.

No, these men made it their business to find out what consumers wanted. The consumers then rewarded them greatly for making available the products they wanted, when they wanted them, at a price they were willing to pay.

The men who bitterly envy them do so only because they are not willing to do what they did ~ or do not even *know* what they did.

Those who wish that success would fall into their laps will wish forever. But those who look at the world as it is, who recognize that the consumer is king, who take the trouble to find out what the consumer wants ~ these men make fortunes. People will always reward them ~ because people will not want to be without their services.

If you never become a Rockefeller or a Carnegie, the degree of your own personal success will still depend upon how you use this secret of success. And the rest of this book will be devoted to showing you *how* to use it, how to make it work for *you*.

We will develop techniques that can be used to find out what people want and how much they will pay for it. We'll see how you can be a salesman ~ to sell products and services for a living, to sell yourself into a better job, or just to gain the cooperation of your family and friends ~ by using this secret of success.

And we'll see that there are *no* exceptions to this rule of success. It is 100% usable. If there are any possible exceptions that occur to you now, they will probably be covered before you reach the end of this book.

It's *your* life; what are you going to do with it? Your future is truly in *your* hands. There is no one else to whom you can assign the responsibility. You will succeed or fail in accordance with how well you practice the secret of success.

To make the most of your life, you must:

Find out what people want and help them get it!

Part II

Chapter 8

SELLING IS EASY

Selling is easy.

Maybe it hasn't seemed easy to you before now.

Possibly, at this point in your life, selling is a deadly game that you're *not* winning. Maybe, as you look around you, you see other salesmen who appear to possess the qualities of success ~ the qualities you lack and wish so much you had.

Maybe you're hoping someday you'll acquire the forcefulness and the golden tongue that seem to be required. But you don't have them yet.

As you turn for help to books or speeches on salesmanship, or listen to your sales manager saying you could do better, the same picture always emerges. It's the picture of "the successful salesman" ~ a picture that is not you. You're told . . .

1. You must be aggressive. To succeed, you're supposed to be a true warrior ~ one who relishes the give-and-take conflict between buyer and seller. You must fight to dominate the sales interview and impose your will upon the buyer.
2. You must be tenacious. You just cannot accept "no" for an answer. Hang on until the buyer gives in. And if ~ for some strange, unforgivable reason ~ you don't close the sale on the first call, stay on the trail of the prospect until you nail him.
3. You must be a glib talker. Have an answer for every objection, a story for everyone. You have to mesmerize people so they'll buy things they don't really want.

4. You must manipulate people, control them by your overpowering will, move them like pawns to do your bidding.
5. You must have nerves of steel. You must never know fear and never let your emotions interfere with your work.
6. You must be tireless, constantly on the go. Every extra minute must be spent prospecting, finding new sales to make.
7. You must be single-minded. Never allow your family or other interests to interfere with your work.
8. And you're supposed to have overwhelming confidence in yourself. You must enter every sales interview knowing you're going to get the sale.

As you ponder these requirements, it probably occurs to you that

- (1) you could never really be all of those things;
- (2) even if you could, you'd never feel comfortable in the role; and
- (3) you'd probably spend the rest of your life with a pain in the pit of your stomach.

Let's begin this book by making life a great deal easier for you. Take a pen or pencil and *cross out* those eight points. You never again need to pay attention to someone who tells you those qualities are needed to succeed.

Selling is nothing like that. But thousands of writers, talkers and hard-driving sales managers have made it seem that way.

The picture created is enough to make any salesman scared to death to get out of bed in the morning. No wonder you can't live up to what's expected of you ~ it's impossible! Even if you could, you'd be a nervous wreck.

No matter how many men you have met who *seem* to possess those qualities, there's no reason to feel left out. I'm going to show you a way of selling that bypasses all of those well-known qualifications.

You're going to learn some key principles. We can even call them *secrets* ~ the secrets of dealing with other human beings. Why they are secrets, I don't know. They're so logical, so simple, so easy to understand that it's amazing there haven't been hundreds of books written about them. (When it is mentioned in a book, it is buried among other, contradicting advice.) But this is the first one, to the best of my knowledge.

With these principles, you'll see how easy selling is. So relax and forget for the moment all you've learned before. You're about to enter a new world of salesmanship.

In this world, there isn't any conflict between buyer and seller. There are no stomach-aches, no mysteries, no feeling of trying to do the impossible.

The world you're about to enter is *the real world*. And you'll never have to leave the real world to find success.

Just as you are right now, you can become a great salesman. You don't have to remake your personality to do it. You don't have to become an extrovert ~ you don't have to manipulate people ~ you don't have to be a glib talker ~ you don't need overwhelming confidence (although you'll probably acquire it anyway).

And you won't have to ignore your family and head for the divorce court. In fact, you'll have far *more* time to spend on the things you enjoy in life. This book will show you how.

In it, you'll see what a true salesman is, what he has to do to make the sale, and how he does it.

It isn't a long book because there isn't that much to understand. You'll only have to learn a few simple rules to use the principles successfully.

The principles work because they're consistent with life as it is. They've helped many salesmen become successful. And they've worked invariably for me.

For the first ten years of my selling career, I tried to succeed through the typical, orthodox methods. I worked long hours and I made very little money.

For the last ten years, I've used the principles in this book. During that time, I've worked very short hours and made a lot of money.

Selling is easy for me now. I enjoy it because I understand it and control it. No longer is it a mysterious game to be played with unwilling prospects. It revolves around motivation.

Not long after I first discovered these principles, I had an unusually good opportunity to demonstrate their value. I was faced with a colossal sales problem that could never have been solved without them.

It was a unusual challenge. In fact, it exaggerated the principles involved. But that will help us to see the key issues in salesmanship much more clearly.

Once you understand the principle that handled this sale, you should never be afraid of any problem you might have to face in selling.

Here is the story . . .

Chapter 9

THE SALE

It was my first day on the job selling advertising. I had gone to work for a publishers' representative firm. The company sold advertising for several different magazines that were circulated to various types of businesses.

My employer asked me to go see a chrome-plating manufacturer, to sell him advertising in a magazine going to automotive chain store dealers.

If that sounds like a strange, faraway world to you, it was just as strange to *me* that day. I knew absolutely nothing about the chrome-plating business or the automotive chain store business ~ and very little about advertising.

I was told that the prospect usually bought a small ad of ¼ page in the magazine's once-a-year special issue. My employer hoped that I could get him to increase that to a 1/3 page ad this year. But how could I motivate him?

I called the manufacturer and made an appointment to see him that afternoon. I spent two hours with him. When I left, I had a signed order. Not for ¼ page, or 1/3 page, but for *three full pages* of advertising.

How did I do it?

By selling myself? That's always part of it, of course ~ but it's not really the secret of this sale.

By spending the morning researching his business? No ~ when I walked into his office, I still knew nothing about his company or his industry.

By bluffing my way through? No ~ there was no need to pretend to be something I wasn't.

By admitting my ignorance? No ~ although I would have done so had the prospect asked me. But in two whole hours, he never questioned my authority.

By getting a lucky break? No. In fact, my approach took the matter out of the realm of blind luck and gave me complete control over it.

How did I do it? Lay this book down and imagine yourself in that situation. What would *you* have done? After you've thought about it, compare your answer with mine.

* * * * *

I walked into the office of the owner of the company. After meeting him and his sales manager, I asked him, "Mr. Enfield, what's the biggest sales problem facing you right now?"

He proceeded to give me a thorough education on the subject of his sales problems. He must have talked for about 45 minutes, off and on. I interrupted him many times with questions, and his sales manager often added comments to what he said.

His biggest problem was obtaining adequate distribution in certain areas. His conventional distributors couldn't seem to crack some territories.

He was already familiar with the automotive chain stores; he used them to supplement his regular distribution in some parts of the country.

During the conversation, an idea was hatched. I don't really remember which of the three of us actually originated the idea ~ it was sort of a joint brainchild, a product of our intensive examination of his distribution problems.

The idea was to try to use the automotive chain stores as a weapon in his difficult areas. If the product were offered through the chain stores, the conventional dealers might respond jealously and increase their coverage ~ just to keep the chain stores out.

If it didn't work out that way, the chain stores would at least provide some extra distribution in those areas. So he couldn't very well lose ~ no matter how the conventional dealers responded.

Inevitably, the question arose as to whether or not our magazine had good circulation in those difficult areas. Frankly, I couldn't read the circulation statement well enough to tell.

So I used my telephone credit card to phone the publisher, long distance, from the prospect's office. I told him the desired areas and received from him the circulation figures for those territories. The coverage was good enough to make the plan worth trying.

The prospect had always purchased a ¼ page ad in the magazine, once each year. No matter what it was called, it was nothing more than a gift to the "nice guy" salesman who had previously called on him. Consequently, the prospect never had a reason to increase the size of the ad.

But now he was advertising for a *profitable* reason. So it had to be done right. A small ad would never have accomplished what he wanted. Three full pages were ordered.

Needless to say, my employer was surprised, gratified and respectful when I returned to the office. As I soon discovered, he was one of the rare salesmen who *do* understand what selling is all about. So it was not difficult for him to comprehend what had happened in the prospect's office.

But what *did* happen? What was the principle I used? And how could it apply in other situations?

The key element in the solution was my simple question, "What's the biggest sales problem facing you right now?" Everything flowed irresistibly from that.

As we proceed through the next few chapters, this example will become more and more clear to you. For it was a very well-organized sales interview; it proceeded inevitably toward its successful conclusion. You'll understand why I was unafraid. And you'll see that I knew what I was doing every step of the way, despite my technical ignorance of the industries involved.

The answer has to do with *motivation* ~ the most misunderstood facet of selling. "I just can't seem to motivate people," is a common complaint of salesmen. But the statement itself turns the matter upside down, as you'll see.

Very few people understand the secret of motivation . . .

Chapter 10

THE SECRET OF MOTIVATION

Probably 99 out of 100 salesmen try to motivate their prospects. *And that's their mistake.*

You're not capable of motivating *anyone* ~ no matter *how* persuasive you think you are.

Let's look at the example I gave in the last chapter. How did I manage to motivate that prospect?

The answer is that *I didn't*. He was *already* motivated. I merely asked *him what it was* that motivated him. And he told me.

As a matter of fact, when I asked him what his biggest problem was, he not only told me his biggest, he threw in a half-dozen other problems for good measure.

Any businessman is concerned about dozens of things at any given time. Here are just a few examples: poor employee rapport; lethargic salesmen; bad leads from his advertising; finding new markets; a negative image in his customers' eyes; quarterly taxes to be paid next Tuesday; spotty distribution; a competitor's new line; cost-profit squeezes; seasonal delivery problems; lagging sales; higher transportation costs; new government regulations; suppliers cheating him; etc., etc., etc.

Not motivated??? How could a man with so many problems not be motivated? He's a live bundle of motivations. There are so many things he wants, so many problems to solve, so many hopes, so many dreams. He's *loaded* with motivations.

Everyone is already motivated. The only question is "By what?" Your job is to find out what it is that motivates your prospect. And then show him how he can get what he wants through your product or service. Only then will he buy.

We just saw a handful of matters that could be motivating a businessman prospect. What if your prospect is a consumer? What might be motivating him?

Here are a few examples: dissatisfaction with his child's education in the local schools; the rising cost of living; meeting the next property tax bill; finding a new hobby; communicating with his children; marital relations; redecorating the house; saving for a vacation; his prestige in the neighborhood; rewiring the house; getting a better job; making more money; looking for a loved one; etc., etc., etc.

Your prospect has already lived a good many years before you came along. He has a pretty good idea what his life is all about and what he wants to do with it. He has plans in mind.

He makes decisions for himself. He may listen to others and sometimes take advice. But it's still up to him to determine *whose* advice he will accept. There is no way you can overrule the fact that he decides for himself what he will do with his own money.

He knows what he wants ~ maybe precisely, maybe vaguely. And his motivations are the hopes and dreams and plans he has that he feels will bring him happiness. Those motivations exist before you ever walk onto the scene.

You can try, if you wish, to *change* his motivation. But why bother? Motivations develop over a period of time; they are the result of a great deal of thought. Any sudden changes are usually because of a new development involving a previous motivation; in other words, it has been altered only slightly, not really changed.

The successful salesman realizes something that others do not understand:
Every individual is already motivated.

Your job as a salesman is to *find* the prospect's motivation and demonstrate to him that your product will help him get what he wants.

The salesman who tries to motivate others will take forever with every prospect and get nowhere. He'll be losing sales that might otherwise have been made. And he'll waste time with people who are not prospects ~ in the vain hope that he can motivate them eventually.

In this book, we'll expand upon this principle of motivation. We'll also examine some of those oft-repeated tales of sales magic ~ the ones where the salesman has apparently sold someone something he *didn't* really want. We'll see that there was much more to the interview than that. We'll see that the salesman *did* appeal to an existing motivation ~ either intentionally or by accident.

For now, we can create one simple rule that is the foundation of successful salesmanship, the reason why selling is easy. To establish this rule, let's analyze the typical prospect you meet in your selling day. What do we know about him?

We know that he's seeking the best possible life for himself. His resources are limited, however; he has only so much time and energy and money. So he must allocate those resources on some basis that will bring him as much as possible.

He makes plans and programs, ways of getting what he wants. His motivations are the goals at the end of those plans. He knows what it is he wants and he has some idea of how to get it.

Which would be the *easier* thing to do ~ *help* him get what he wants? ~ or try to *overcome* his motivations?

The answer is obvious.

What if he wants something you can't offer? If that's the case, you may as well face it. You can't make him buy by ignoring the truth. So the sooner you know he's *not* a prospect, the faster you can get to someone who is.

But how do you know you can't give him what he wants? Most salesmen have never really recognized the full value of their own products. They have been told of a half-dozen benefits and been urged to push those benefits. But almost any useful product has literally *dozens* of different applications. In some cases, *hundreds*.

Yes, there are usually hundreds of different motivations to which a product might appeal, if the salesman would open his mind to them. But when the salesman picks out a half-dozen benefits and dwells on them, the odds are against his having picked the right ones.

If you're thinking you couldn't possibly take the time in a sales interview to present hundreds of benefits, you're right. But suppose you know in advance which benefits would appeal to this man and only presented those? Wouldn't you be more effective if you did?

Well, you *can*. All you have to do is to find out first what motivates him. Then you will know what features of your product will be important to him.

We can put it in another way. There are certain qualifications that will determine whether or not this prospect will buy. There's a certain basis upon which he'll make his decision. Find out what it is and you can concentrate solely on that.

Here we can see the secret of successful salesmanship. If there is one rule, one key, one basic law that tells us what you have to do to make a sale, then this must be it:

Find this prospect's motivation and appeal to it.

That's all there is to it. Find *this* prospect's motivation and appeal to *it*. The emphasis is on the word *this*. The individual is different from all other human beings in the world. He has his own life, his own outlook, his own nature, his own personality, his own ideas, his own goals, his own plans. You cannot treat him as a carbon copy of every prospect you've ever faced. He isn't.

If you try to put him into a mold, you'll fail. Unless you appeal to him in a way that fits what *he* is, he won't respond. Why should he do something he doesn't want to do? Why should he spend money on things that don't advance his own precious plans? Why should he give up the few dollars he has to spend ~ just because you've been aggressive or eloquent or courteous or friendly?

The only possible way you can make the sale is if you have somehow appealed to the very things that make *this* person tick. And that can happen in one of two ways ~ either by accident or by design.

The average salesman makes a sale every few interviews because he accidentally touches upon something that is important to that prospect.

The successful salesman makes more sales because he talks only about those things that appeal to the prospect in front of him. He doesn't waste his time presenting "benefits" that aren't *really* benefits to this prospect.

Yes, there *is* a secret of salesmanship. It's the difference between success and failure, the difference that makes selling either easy or difficult. It's a secret that can be practiced by almost anyone who can hear and can speak. You don't have to be an extrovert to practice it. You don't have to be a smooth talker or have a domineering personality.

All it takes is this one simple rule: *Find this prospect's motivation and appeal to it*. Selling is easy for the man who does.

Well then, how do you do it? How do you find that motivation? How do you appeal to it?

Let's look now at the techniques that will put this rule to work for you. It helps greatly to think of the sales interview as consisting of five steps. These steps

provide a logical sequence that leads the interview irresistibly to a successful conclusion, if there's a sale to be made.

Each of the next five chapters will discuss one of these five steps, beginning with step number one . . .

Chapter 11

FIRST THINGS FIRST

If the secret of selling is to appeal to this prospect's motivation, your first task must be to find out what that motivation is.

Most sales are lost because the salesman presented his product *before* he knew what motivated his prospect. That's unrealistic. Don't think in terms of *your selling* something; think, instead, that the *prospect* is going to *buy* something. He's the one who has the purchasing power and will make the decision. And he's the one who will decide *how* the decision will be made.

He's going to buy something. So the first goal is to find out what he'd be willing to buy. It's as simple as that.

Step number one of any sales interview should be to *discover the prospect's motivation*.

In effect, you're asking the prospect, "What do I have to do to get this sale? Since there's some basis upon which this purchase will be made, I'd like to know right now what that basis is. Then I can save us both a lot of time by dealing only with that basis."

This isn't what you'll actually say, of course, but that's the crux of it.

There isn't any way to sell him anything until you know what it is the prospect is trying to acquire. So begin by discovering his motivation.

Don't confuse *products* with *motivations*. No one ever buys a product. He buys what the product will accomplish. He buys because there's something he wants for his life. Your job is to find out what that *something* is.

Begin by finding out what it is the prospect wants. Discover his motivation.

How do you do this? Simple ~ just ask him.

I don't mean that you should put it as bluntly as "What motivates you, Mr. Jones?" He probably wouldn't understand the meaning of your question anyway. And most individuals aren't articulate enough to explain briefly and easily what they want. You need to develop a series of questions that bring the prospect's motivation to the surface where you can deal with it.

Let's illustrate this with some examples. There are two basic types of situations involved. One is where *the prospect has come to you* to consider buying something. The other is where *you have approached the prospect* and initiated the sales interview.

Suppose the prospect has come to you. Let's assume you're an automobile salesman. You might begin the conversation with, "What do you consider the most important feature in an automobile, Mr. Wilson?" His answer could deal with style, safety, performance, comfort, prestige, or any of several other possibilities.

If he says it's style, find out what kind of style is important to him. Delve into his feelings more deeply. Find out what he wants before you try to sell him any of your cars.

Another key question might be, "Why have you decided to consider trading cars at this time?" If he tells you that he's getting concerned about repair bills on his old car, mentally file that bit of information. *He's telling you what he hopes to accomplish through the purchase of a car.* Later, you may want to dwell on your guarantee and the relief it provides from repair bills.

If he says that he's trading because his car is too old to be suitably presentable for his business contacts, that can be a valuable piece of information. Later you may want to point out the prestige and elegance associated with a particular model of your line.

It's important, too, to find out what kind of car he's looking for ~ body type, color preference, size, etc. He may not be too sure what he wants; but he'll know what he *doesn't* want, and that will help narrow the considerations.

When the prospect has come to you, the basic question you're asking is, "What is it you want to accomplish through the purchase of this product?"

Now let's suppose you have initiated the interview ~ that *you* are approaching *him*. In that case, you can't ask him what he wants from the product; he hasn't given it any thought. Instead, you want to get him to talk about the facets of his life or

business in which your product would be involved. In that way, you can discover his motivations, the unsatisfied needs that might be a market for your product.

For example, suppose you sell a bookkeeping service to businessmen. You can open the conversation with “Mr. Jones, I’m anxious to find out if our bookkeeping service could be profitable to you. It has saved a lot of time and out-of-pocket expense for other businessmen. But I don’t know anything about *your* business ~ so I don’t know how it might help you solve any present problems. Would you mind taking a few minutes to tell me how you handle your accounting now?”

Most salesmen would be afraid to make a statement like that. They are afraid to admit that the service *might not* help the prospect. They think it would be an invitation for him to say he doesn’t need it and terminate the interview. Salesmen believe that because they’ve never tried it.

Let’s analyze the statement. In addition to encouraging him to tell you what you need to know to make the sale, there are three key impressions you’re giving to the prospect.

First, you’re being humble. The typical salesman would say, “I know you’re going to like this,” or something similar. But how can he know such a thing? When the prospect hears such a remark, he’s bound to consider the salesman to be arrogant, presumptuous and ignorant of the fact that the prospect makes his own decisions. But in our statement you’re acknowledging that *he* makes the decisions and that information you don’t have will be necessary to determine the appropriateness.

Second, you’re expressing an interest in his business ~ a *genuine* interest. You’re *not* repeating the familiar and trite “How’s your business been?” You’re demonstrating a realistic desire to know more about his situation.

Third, you’re telling him that *you* know that the service will have to be profitable to him before he buys.

All of this permits him to let his guard down. He knows he’s not dealing with an aggressive, “you-have-to-buy-this” type of salesman. Rather, he’s dealing with a man who’s anxious to find out if there’s some way to improve the prospect’s business.

See how much is wrapped up in that one opening statement? It has launched the interview on a relaxed, no-conflict basis. And it will get him to start talking.

And *that’s* the main idea ~ to get him talking. Get him to tell you where his main problems are, what his near-term objectives are, what his long-term goals are. Get him to tell you what he’d like to have but doesn’t have now. In other words, get him to tell you what you would have to do in order to make a sale.

Some salesmen say you should never let the prospect talk too much, because you lose control of the interview. That's ridiculous. And salesmen who practice that philosophy suffer with meager commissions. What's the point in talking until you know what would interest the prospect?

What if the prospect isn't anxious to talk? You may think that's a problem ~ but only because you've never tried this approach. Most anyone will talk if you let him ~ provided he's not pressed for time. If he *is* pressed, explain the importance of having enough time to explore his situation and make an appointment for a more convenient time.

Assuming he *does* have the time, it's very rare when a man won't talk about his own business. If you think about it for a moment, you can understand how lonely he is. He has a great many problems on his mind and there's no one interested in listening to him talk about them.

When he sat down to breakfast this morning, he tried to tell his wife what was on his mind. But she quickly interrupted him by asking when he could get their son's teeth straightened.

At the noontime Rotary Club meeting, he tried to tell his friend Sam about his business problems. Sam's a businessman himself; surely he'd understand. But that's the trouble ~ Sam has his own problems. And before our prospect could get very far into his story, it reminded Sam of one *he* wanted to tell.

Finally, back at the office, he figured his secretary would listen to him. After all, she's being paid to do whatever he says. But after talking for a few minutes, he realized that her mind was far away ~ probably on tonight's date.

But then you come along. And you *ask* him to talk about some of his problems. He'll be *glad* to see you. You're a rare person in his life ~ someone with a *sincere* interest in what he has to say.

He may not be used to talking ~ so be prepared with a list of questions that will encourage him.

If he's a slow talker, be patient.

If he roams out of the subject area that concerns your business, bring him back to the subject by asking another question.

But, above all, pay attention to what he says. *He's telling you how to make the sale!*

Take notes. If he begins a statement with, "I guess the most important factor to me is . . .," then make a note of that and put a big star next to it.

To carry out this first step requires a little practice, but you'll be amazed at how quickly you pick up the technique.

Develop a series of questions that will help uncover the buyer's motivations. Think about the key factors that go into a prospect's decision, and design questions that will identify which factors are the most important to this individual.

You'll have to develop the questions yourself ~ based upon your industry, your product and your market. But to give you an idea of the kinds of questions that are useful, here are a number of examples. These are questions you would ask the prospect, organized by the type of product being sold. Read all the examples, no matter what the nature of your business. The illustrations will help to stimulate *your* list of questions.

Real Estate: What's the biggest problem about your present home? (The answer will provide a key point in the presentation of the home you'll offer.) How do you visualize your dream home? (Listen carefully to the answer to that one. Even if the prospect describes a home way above his price range, you may be able to make the sale by offering a home with one or two of those dream benefits.) How much entertaining do you do in your home? What kind? (This helps to indicate how much the prospect is concerned about prestige benefits.)

Advertising: What's the biggest sales problem you face right now? (Always a key question.) Do you use your advertising to produce sales leads? If so, how many leads are you getting now? How good do the leads turn out to be? (Perhaps he's attracting the wrong kind of people with his present advertising ~ people who are poor prospects for his product.) What kind of a prospect would derive the most value from your product? If you're not looking for leads, what do you want your advertising to accomplish? (Prestige for his salesmen? Intangible corporate image? Specific information about his product?)

Industrial Machinery: How much does it cost you per-unit to produce your product on your present machinery? What problems do you have? What kind of product is produced? How many hours per day do you run your machines? In addition to cost, what other factors are important? (Safety? Size? Appearance?, etc.)

Art: Here on this one wall are a series of different kinds of paintings; can you tell me which ones are most appealing to you? (This kind of technique is useful in any business where the prospect might have difficulty describing what he likes.) Where will the painting hang? How large a wall? What would you like it to do for

your room? (This will help identify whether the prospect is an art-lover or is buying art to enhance his own image.)

Clothing: For what purpose will you be using this suit? (Later, you can dwell on the ways a particular suit will enhance that purpose ~ whether it be business, social, whatever.) In what kind of style do you feel most at home? (Don't waste your time with styles he doesn't want.) What color suits do you have now? Are there any colors you *don't* like? (You can then show him suits that will supplement his present wardrobe and still be attractive to him.)

Suppose you are soliciting clients for an advertising agency or any kind of service that is more-or-less permanent. In that case you might ask questions like these: What are the biggest problems you find in dealing with an advertising agency? (He'll probably tell you the things he doesn't like about his present agency.) What do you want from your agency? Which functions do you prefer to do yourself? What's the biggest sales problem you now face? Has your agency taken any part in helping to solve that problem?

As I said, these are only samples ~ designed to show you the *types* of questions you need. In addition, you'll also need to ask questions of a more mechanical nature. For example, before showing a prospect a new home, you'd want to know in what section of town he wants to live, how much he can afford to spend, how many bedrooms are needed, etc. Very often those questions, as unexciting as they may seem, can suggest key selling points. The trick is to always be alert to anything that might be an unsatisfied desire that *you* could satisfy.

To get started, make a list of questions that apply to your business. You should have *at least* ten ~ even if you don't always use them all. They don't have to be memorized ~ but a least two or three should be mentally handy at all times.

If you find it difficult to think of questions for your list, then start by listing all the possible reasons why someone might buy your product. What are the benefits your product provides? List every one you can think of; don't take any for granted. Some of them may seem too obvious to you ~ but they may be very important to the man who doesn't enjoy them right now.

When your list includes several dozen benefits, organize them into groups. You can use headings such as safety, appearance, prestige value, cost, performance, etc.

Think of questions that help to identify which of these groups are most important to a given prospect. Ask questions about benefits within a group ~ to see if the prospect shows much interest in that kind of benefit.

You'll develop additional questions from the things your prospects tell you during these interviews. Very soon, you'll have a good idea of what you want to know and the questions will come easily.

You should also create an *opening statement* that comfortably gets the conversation going in the fact-finding direction. For example, in real estate: "I want to find for you the house you've always wanted. But, of course, I can't know what that would be without knowing more about your tastes and requirements. Rather than wasting your time showing you dozens of houses you wouldn't want, let's take a few minutes first to discuss the ideal home for you."

In real estate, you would have many different houses available from which to choose. But suppose your business only provides one product to offer. How do you justify step one to the prospect?

Perhaps you'll do it this way: "There are many facets of my product. I could probably talk for hours about it; but that wouldn't do either one of us any good. And I'm not really sure that my product does the things *you're* looking for. Could we take a few minutes first to talk about *your* situation? Then we can determine whether or not I have something profitable to offer you."

Be prepared. You may be more nervous than you had anticipated. So write down some questions where you can easily refer to them, perhaps on the paper you'll use to take notes when you're with the prospect. That way you'll never be stuck for a question, even if your mind goes blank.

With just a little practice, you'll find that step one will be easy for you. You'll have no trouble thinking of questions that are important ~ and you'll feel no awkwardness about asking them. It will make so much sense to *you and to your prospect* that it will be the logical, natural thing to do.

This is the first step of the sales interview. *It must always come first.* The success of the rest of the interview depends upon the information you obtain in this first step.

And you may need a great deal of information. So don't waste time at the outset of the interview trying to ingratiate yourself with the prospect by talking about his office, his golf game or anything else (unless you're selling office equipment or golf clubs). Make yourself attractive to him by getting right down to business ~ *his* business.

This is the most important step of the sale. Learn to handle this part well and everything else will fall in place.

The first step of any sales interview should be *to discover the prospect's motivation*.

Then, when you think you understand his situation ~ when you believe you know what it will take to make a sale ~ when you're sure you've discovered upon what basis he would buy ~ then, and only then, should you go onto step number two .
..

Chapter 12

THE TERMS OF THE SALE

Now that you have identified the standard upon which he'll judge his purchase, you're ready for the second step.

It is to *Summarize the Motivation*.

At this point, you want to take the mass of material he has just handed you and summarize it. He has given you a somewhat disorganized group of ideas and observations; they must now be put together in a package that's organized and useful.

Try to sum up everything he's said into one sentence, or into one paragraph at the most.

For example, you can say: "I think we can agree, then, that what's needed is a way to accomplish _____, and to do it within the framework of what you're paying now. Is that correct?"

Or you can say, "In other words, if we can just find a way to accomplish _____, then you'd be in a position to do _____. Isn't that the crux of it?"

Either way, you're summing up *step one* in such a way as to set the qualifications for the sale.

It's important that you gain his agreement on this. Not because, as many salesmen believe, if you can get a man saying "yes" enough times, you can ask him to buy and he'll be in the habit of saying "yes." That just isn't true. He could say "yes" 20 times, but when you get to the order, he'll say "no" very easily if he *doesn't* want to buy.

You want his agreement so *you* can be sure you've understood him correctly. He's only going to buy if he decides it will be profitable to himself. He won't buy if he doesn't. So you want to be sure you've understood him correctly when he told you what would be profitable to him.

This second step is important because it gets the issue out in front of both of you. It establishes an open agreement between you as to the nature of the transaction.

Even if you're sure you understand what this person's motivation is, you should still go through these first two steps. That gets the matter out in the open ~ where it's clearly understood between you. You are setting the qualifications for the sale.

You could also call the second step *defining the problem*. For that is, in effect, what you're doing. And any solution you have to offer will be meaningless until that problem has been properly defined.

You are rendering a useful service to the prospect when you define the problem for him. As a matter of fact, you may put your finger on the key element of a problem that has plagued him for years. It may be one that's never been solved because it's never been seen in its proper light.

His understanding of the issue may grow with your definition of the problem. And your clear, concise summary will add to his conviction that you are sincerely interested in his affairs, that you really have been listening while he's been talking.

There is nothing as exciting to an individual (a businessman, particularly) as the discovery that someone else truly understands what he's up against.

Step number two is to *summarize the motivation*.

If he doesn't agree with your summary, then get it clarified. Ask as many more questions as are necessary to find out what you need to know. But, above all, *do not go onto the third step until you've summarized his motivation in such a way as to gain his wholehearted agreement*.

Once you've let him tell you the nature of his motivation, and once you've summed it up in a way that enables you both to see it clearly, you're ready then to go onto step number three . . .

Chapter 13

NOW ~ YOU CAN START TALKING

Step number three in the sales interview is to *Present Your Product*.

Before now, you didn't have anything to sell him ~ because you really didn't have any idea what he'd be willing to buy.

If you begin the interview by presenting your product, you are leaving your fate to blind luck. For there are literally hundreds of things that could be said about your product or service. How do you know which are the most important to *him*?

But now that you've discovered his motivation, you have something to sell. Now you can appeal to that motivation and show him how it can be satisfied. Now you can start talking.

The only features of your product that are important are those he's indicated are of concern to him. Forget all the wonderful things that inspired the last prospect. Forget all the sales pointers they gave you back at the office. *Your job now is to talk to your prospect in ways that will show him how he can get what he wants.*

As you talk, stick to those things he's indicated are meaningful to him. *There's no such thing as a "captive audience."* The first time you stray from what's important to him, he'll start thinking about his plans for the evening, how much work he has left to finish, or any one of dozens of other things that are more important than listening to a salesman's pitch.

But as long as you continue to concentrate upon the matters he's indicated are essential to his life, you should have no trouble holding his interest. Imagine! ~ you're giving a sales presentation in which your prospect is giving you his wholehearted and enthusiastic attention!

Keeping his attention is a continual job, however. Even if you begin by discussing things of interest to him, the first time you stray from that, his mind will

wander. And then, even if you return to the point, he may not hear you because his mind will have wandered.

If you think you may have lost his attention, ask him a question of the kind you used in step one. Use his answer as the basis of your next statement. This will bring his attention back to you. And then make sure you don't wander from the point again.

After all he's told you about his interests, if you lose his attention, it's your own fault. But even if you do, you can bring him back with further questions.

In step number three you are, in effect, playing back to him his own comments ~ but now built around your product. Everything you say should be keyed to something he said in step one.

If he told you that safety was very important in a car, dwell on the many safety features of the car you're selling. Don't try to convince him the high horsepower rating is a benefit.

If it's a business proposition and he's made it plain that costs are all-important, show him on paper where the money will be saved and keep dwelling on that ~ without being monotonous.

If your prospect has told you he's always wanted a little house in a quiet section of town with plenty of trees in the back yard, and you've found that house for him, do your talking while standing in the back yard admiring the trees. And suggest you both be still for a minute and listen to the quiet.

Talk about the things he's always wanted and can now have. Talk to him in *his* language in terms of *his* interest about the things *he's* told you are important. Forget everything else.

Let him know you understand what's important to him and that you have it for him.

Whatever the nature of his business, whatever the nature of your business, build your entire presentation around the standards *he's* set for the sale. Include every factor he's indicated is important ~ including the effect of the cost upon his budget.

Your presentation doesn't have to be long-winded. After all, you're eliminating dozens of things you might otherwise have said, but which you can see now are irrelevant.

To increase your effectiveness in handling step three, make a list of all the many applications of your product. Look for new benefits that your product might

provide. Talk to the designers of the product, if possible, to discover some of the benefits they had in mind when they designed its many features.

Make it a point at sales meetings to report new and unusual applications that have been suggested to salesmen by prospects and customers.

Put your imagination to work thinking of unusual ways your product could help someone get more out of life. Every time you think of something, write it down.

Once you start looking, you'll be surprised at the number of new applications you'll discover. As your list grows, review it often to keep as many of those applications in mind as possible.

This will help to suggest new prospects that should be approached ~ individuals who might be able to benefit from one or more of these unusual applications.

But it will also make a substantial improvement in step three of your presentation. When a prospect makes an apparently-unimportant remark in step one, it may ring a bell in your mind ~ and you'll be ready with a dandy application to offer in step three.

Step three consists entirely of product applications and benefits that are important to your prospect. Don't talk about anything else. But, at the same time, don't ignore any facet of the product that he's indicated *is* important to him.

All of what's been said in this chapter assumes that your product or service *will* satisfy his motivation. If it won't, there's no point in hitting your head against the wall trying to sell something he won't buy.

If you don't have what he's looking for, the only way you could hope to make the sale would be to lie. And why bother doing that? Selling is easy. Why make it difficult for yourself by being dishonest?

When you use the principles offered in this book, you are no longer a tiresome salesman. You are now a friend. You may even be a hero to some of your customers. For you're helping them to get what they want.

Why destroy their respect and your attitude by lying? The lie will be discovered eventually and you'll no longer be a friend.

I know there's a temptation sometimes to stretch the truth to get a particular sale. But there are plenty more prospects where this one came from. And if you're

willing to be honest with him, he may even *help* you find other prospects. His respect for your integrity will probably encourage him to recommend your services.

If you *don't* have the answer to his problem, tell him so. All you have to say is, "It appears from what you've told me that you're looking for something our product doesn't do. But I may be overlooking something here. Do you mind if we discuss it further?"

If you know of another product that *will* do what he wants, you might as well recommend it. If you help him get what he wants, your word will be accepted at face value in the future when *you* have what he wants.

Don't close the door on your own product, however. Further discussion may reveal an application of the product that matches up with an interest he hadn't previously expressed. Keep your imagination alert; you never know when a lost sale can suddenly be yours again. Knowing dozens of product applications will be a great help.

The important thing is to be honest with him. Your position will be stronger that way. The man who tells an expedient fib never knows when he'll be painted into a corner by his own lies.

Even if your product *does* seem right for him, don't stretch the benefits further than the truth. Be honest about the things you don't know. If he asks, "Will this take care of the _____ problem we discussed?," don't be afraid to say, "I can't promise it will. It's possible it will help, but I can't guarantee it."

Never promise more than you can deliver. If you're a stock broker, you don't have to *guarantee* a stock will go up in price. Why should you? Any intelligent investor ought to be afraid of the broker who does.

Instead, make a simple statement like this: "We live in an uncertain world. There are literally millions of factors affecting the price of a stock. No one can be positive about that which he doesn't control and it's wise to minimize uncertainty. But this stock appears to be the most likely to go up. I would feel safer with your money in this stock than in any other."

And if you're in real estate, don't *promise* an increase in land values. If you think the property will increase in value, tell the prospect this is what you *think* and give him all the reasons that have led to your opinion. There is nothing more he could gain from someone else.

In the same way, don't be afraid to bring up the drawbacks of your product to him. They exist and he'll recognize them sooner or later. Let him know that you're

aware of them. In that way, he won't be afraid there are others that you're hiding from him.

Understand that a drawback is not a sign of weakness. Every product is designed to do certain things; no product is designed to do everything. The fact that your product doesn't do a particular thing may be a drawback to *this* prospect, but it isn't necessarily a weakness in the product. In fact, what is a drawback to this prospect is most likely a benefit to someone else.

In this regard, the word "cheap" very often is used thoughtlessly. For example, I play tennis and I spend a lot of time just practicing. When I play a match with someone, I want to use good tennis balls that cost from 65 cents to a dollar apiece. But when I practice my serve, all the benefits of the expensive balls are meaningless to me. I'm glad there are balls on the market costing as little as 33 cents apiece. I can buy several dozen of those and spend less time chasing balls between serves. In some situations, the "cheapness" of the 33-cent ball is a drawback; in other cases, it's a benefit.

In the same way, would it be a "benefit" if all nails on the market were gold-plated and priced accordingly?

When drawbacks become evident, discuss them freely with the prospect. Perhaps arrangements can be made to circumvent them, so as to make the proposition profitable to him.

Don't ever be afraid to discuss anything honestly and openly with your prospect. It will certainly boost his confidence in you. He won't be afraid of you if you're not afraid of the truth about your own product.

There is never any practical reason to stretch the truth in your presentation, nor to make predictions you can't guarantee. Occasionally, you may lose a sale that looked secure before the truth came out, but that will be a rare occasion. And ultimately you will gain far more business because of the personal confidence that honesty gives you and the confidence in you your prospect will have.

This, then, is step number three ~ to *present your product*. Present it solely in terms of the benefits he's told you were important to him.

When you have completed your presentation, you'll enter the next step . . .

Chapter 14

PROBLEMS ARE NO PROBLEM

The fourth step is a rather informal one. We can label it *Answering Questions*.

This will be a period of dialogue between you. Your prospect may ask for clarifications on points he doesn't understand. He may also raise any objections or reservations he has about the proposition.

This is the one step of the interview that may not be necessary in all cases. Each of the other four steps of the sale must be initiated by you. But this one will arise as needed. It may be that all of the clarifications necessary will have been asked for and provided in step three. And it may be that none of the objections will be raised until step five when you attempt to close the sale.

No matter how they arise, your handling of questions and objections is a critical matter. Don't ever be afraid of them; recognize them for what they are. Your prospect is letting you know what still must be done before the sale can be made.

In fact, when you use the techniques of this book, you may find that you'll get more honest objections than you used to get. This will replace that cold, impersonal atmosphere you faced when you used to walk into a man's office, make your presentation, and then be ushered out without the faintest idea what his reaction was.

Now you and he are working together. If you've handled the first three steps correctly, anything he has to say now will be because of his intense interest in your proposition. He sees a possibility of getting what he wants and he wants to make sure your product will do what it appears.

If he spots something you've missed, he'll bring it up rather than take a chance that the proposition may be wrong for him. So relax about objections; recognize that they aren't a threat to you.

Above all, don't revert to the old concept of the sales interview as a conflict between buyer and seller. It's not. You and he are on the same side of the fence now.

Continue to think in terms of *his* interests, of what *he's* trying to accomplish, of how *he* can get what he wants. If you do, you'll be in a much better position to deal with his objections.

I find there's a simple three-part formula that helps me handle objections effectively. I *listen ~ agree ~ suggest*.

If the prospect raises an objection that you know can be handled easily, there's a great temptation to reply quickly, "Oh that doesn't matter. You see, we'll do . . ." Or you might say, "I know what you're saying; but don't worry, that's covered in the policy." In any case, a quick reply is a mistake.

You may not realize it but in *his* eyes you are contradicting him. You raise the image of the stereotyped salesman whose only reaction to objections is to overpower them. There's a much better way.

The first thing you must do is to *listen ~* hear him out. Let him tell you everything he has to say, even if you're sure you know what's coming. Only if you've heard him out can he be sure you understand what's bothering him.

So hear him out. Then *agree*. That means to recognize that he's raised a thoughtful point, one that merits his concern. It *is* a valid point ~ after all, *he's* the buyer and it concerns *him*; it *must* be valid.

Your reply might be, "I see what you mean. That *is* important." Or you might say, "I understand what you're getting at. Well, let's take another look at these specifications and see for sure whether or not that's covered."

You are putting yourself in his position and approaching the matter with the same objectives and the same skepticism that he has. The prospect will not take the pains to understand your position until he's sure you understand his. That's why it's vitally important to identify with his position.

Then you can go onto the third part of this technique. That is to *suggest*. Starting from where he is now, make a suggestion that will improve his position over what he believes it to be.

In other words, you first accept his viewpoint as the *status quo*, a perfectly acceptable position. You then suggest another alternative that provides everything he has already, plus an additional benefit for him.

Let me give you a good example of this technique in action. I once gave group sales presentations for a reading school. There were anywhere from 10 to 40 people attending each presentation.

Under the circumstances, it was impossible to discover the motivation of each prospect prior to making the presentation. As a result, I was particularly plagued with the comment, “I’ll have to think it over.” Naturally the prospect felt like thinking it over; I hadn’t dealt with all the things that were important to him.

The school had a policy that allowed the customer to cancel his enrollment and get back his deposit ~ right up to the day of the first class. In other words, if you changed your mind after enrolling, you could cancel your order and your deposit would be refunded.

I watched other salesmen talking to prospects after presentations. When hit with the “think it over” objection ~ or anything like it ~ the salesman would invariably fire back with what he thought was the perfect answer: “But if you change your mind, you can always get your money back anyway. So why don’t you sign up tonight?”

The prospects rarely responded favorably to such a suggestion, even though it may have been in their self-interests. The salesman was not interpreting it for the individual in terms of his present frame of mind. The superficial appearance was more that the salesman was contradicting the prospect in order to make a sale.

I used the *listen ~ agree ~ suggest* technique. And it worked far more often than not. I first listened patiently as the prospect explained why his “unusual” circumstances made it impossible to enroll at that moment. But he might be able to enroll in a day or two.

My reply was something like this: “I see what you mean. That will be quite all right. Please handle it the way that would be most comfortable for you. If you decide to take the course, just mail in the registration card or bring it by. And if the class you want is still available, we’ll be glad to enroll you.

“There *is* one other alternative available to you, however. Let me suggest it; and then you decide if you think it might help your situation. Since we accept cancellations right up to the first day of the class, you can make a reservation for the class you want while you’re here. Then go home and think about it. If you decide you don’t want the course, just call us on the phone and we’ll mail the registration and deposit to you right away. But if you *do* want to go ahead, you’ll have saved a place in the class you want. And that way you won’t have to make a second trip here, no matter which way you decide. That would seem to be an easier way for you to handle it.”

Recognize what’s being said. In the first paragraph, I agreed with the prospect, accepted his position as being valid. I didn’t pout or threaten him with my disapproval or accuse him of being stupid. What he was going to do was perfectly acceptable. *Only in that way could he relax and let down his guard.* Now he knew he

wasn't engaged in a life-and-death struggle to save his money and honor from an aggressive salesman.

Once he was relaxed, I could make a suggestion ~ with some assurance that he'd hear and understand what I was suggesting. Actually, the suggestion *was* an improvement over what he'd intended to do; this way, he could think it over and still save a place in the class he wanted.

It required my allowing him to relax before he could listen objectively to what I had to say. He had to know first that I wasn't going to try to corner him. And that meant *I* had to relax and let him talk freely ~ unafraid of what he was going to say.

This is the three-part technique for handling objections: *listen ~ agree ~ suggest*. Try it. See how much more relaxed the conversation is. All that sticky tension disappears. There's no longer a battle between buyer and seller. You no longer find yourself getting into arguments.

Always make sure that you aren't contradicting your prospect. Instead, you should be *adding* to his range of alternatives or ideas. If you approach it on that basis, the prospect's problems will never be a problem to you. You'll be able to handle them comfortably and effectively.

The prospect's objections are an opportunity to eliminate all remaining negative considerations and solidify the sale.

This is step four ~ to *answer questions*.

Once you have answered his questions, handled his objections, and cleared up any other misunderstandings, it's time to move onto step five of the interview . . .

Chapter 15

CLOSING IS EASY

Step five in the sales interview is to *Close the Sale*.

The two problems most often raised by salesmen are the inability to motivate and the inability to close sales. This isn't surprising; for both of these tasks are surrounded with great misconceptions.

As we've seen, the secret of motivation is to quit trying to motivate people. The motivation already exists; your job is to discover what it is and appeal to it.

In the same way, too much emphasis is placed upon the specific techniques of closing sales. Supposedly, you're to be so forceful that the buyer can't say no. That's a frightening and difficult task, isn't it?

In reality, the emphasis should be placed upon the earlier steps of the sale. That's where the close becomes easy or difficult.

To understand how to close sales easily, let's go back and review what has preceded the close:

1. You've encouraged the prospect to tell you about his problems, his concerns, his objectives, etc. In effect, he's told you what would be necessary for you to make a sale.
2. You then organized and summarized the things he said, so that you now have a clear-cut understanding between you. You have a common agreement as to what is necessary to make the transaction.
3. You then presented to him a solution for his problems, a way of getting what he wants.
4. Then you ironed out any details or questions in a period of informal conversation between you.

So now where do you stand?

The prospect can see in front of him the way to gratify his desires, to achieve at least one of his current objectives. Do you think he's going to prevent you from giving him what he wants?

To fully understand how ready he is to buy, just put yourself in his position. Suppose *you* had been looking for something. And suppose you ran into someone who was anxious to understand what *you* wanted ~ instead of trying to make you buy something else. And suppose he helped you get a more definitive picture of what it was you were after. And, finally suppose he showed you how much easier it would be to get it than you thought it was.

What would be *your* reaction? Surely, you wouldn't be very hesitant about taking advantage of this opportunity.

Neither will your prospects be hesitant if you have approached them in this way.

Closing is easy ~ *if* you have properly prepared for it. *If* you have carefully and thoughtfully covered the first four steps of the interview, closing the sale will be no problem.

But if you *haven't* laid the proper groundwork, closing the sale will be difficult, awkward and uncomfortable. The air will get thick, a sense of conflict will develop, and you'll find yourself wondering how much of a pest you should be.

Again, put yourself in the prospect's position. Suppose you entered a store of some kind, inquired about a particular product, and received the "full treatment" from the salesman. Suppose he immediately led you to the brand he was pushing, bored you for ten minutes with a full demonstration and explanation of the mechanics of it, and then asked you to buy.

It is unlikely that you'd be ready to buy anything at that point. Instead, you'd start thinking of ways to get out of the store as fast and as gracefully as possible.

Here we have seen the contrast between two different ways of selling. I have exaggerated them slightly in order to identify the differences, but the comparison is a true one.

And from this, we can see the key element in an awkward close: *You are asking the prospect to do something he hasn't yet decided he wants to do.*

In a smooth close, you are merely encouraging the buyer to do what he has already decided he wants to do.

Which is the easy way to sell? Lay the proper groundwork and closing will be easy.

In fact, this is the essential difference between high pressure and low pressure selling. Suppose your best friend were encouraging you to forget the cost and take your vacation in the one place you've always dreamed of. No matter how aggressively he pushed you, you'd never consider him guilty of high pressure.

But suppose he were trying to get you to vacation in a place that seemed unattractive to you. No matter how tactfully he stated his case, you would soon get irritated with his insistence.

Why the difference? Because no one ever objects to being encouraged to do the very thing he wants most to do. Sometimes he needs encouragement; but he doesn't resent it, he *welcomes* it.

The essence of high pressure is not the number of times you ask for the order or the tone of urgency in your voice. It is trying to sell someone something he doesn't see yet as profitable to himself.

It all comes back to the same question: how well did you do your job in the first four steps? And step number one is especially important. If you handled that correctly, the rest pretty well takes care of itself ~ including the close.

If you have dwelt solely on the needs and desires of *this* prospect, the close will be simple and smooth. In fact, he may very well initiate the close himself. That happens to me quite frequently. I'd estimate that in at least half of the sales I've made in the past ten years, I haven't even had to ask for the order. The prospect himself ended step four by suddenly stating that he wanted what I was offering.

That's not surprising. I can't emphasize enough that he'll want the sale to take place as much as you will ~ if you've done your job correctly. In fact, he'll gain more from the sale than you will. All *you* get from it is money ~ he'll get something more valuable than money.

It's an old fallacy to think of the seller as the one who profits most in a transaction. Most people seem to have the vague notion that it's always better to receive money than to spend it. But that isn't true.

Money is only a means to an end. You can't eat it, you can't drive it to work, you can't make love to it, you can't even hold a civil conversation with it. It's true

that money can often *buy* some of those things. But it requires a further transaction to bring that about.

The buyer is ready to enjoy the fruits of the exchange *now*; but the seller must make an additional exchange before he gets what he wants. So which one profits more from the transaction?

It's the buyer who actually has the greatest incentive to see an exchange take place. If he's reluctant, it's either that he has no real desire for what's being offered him ~ or that he hasn't been shown clearly how the proposal will help him get what he wants.

If the buyer doesn't initiate the close, you must. Just as with step one, you should have some closing questions in reserve. These are simple, inoffensive, helpful ways of bringing the interview to a point of action. You usually only need one such question in each interview, but you should have several prepared. Here are some samples:

1. "May I go ahead then and arrange to have this delivered?"
2. "You don't have any objection to my taking your order for this now while I'm here, do you?"
3. "Can I accept your statement as a firm commitment?"
4. "Is it all right then if I go ahead and write up the order?"
5. "If I submit the order today, I should be able to guarantee delivery by Friday. Shall we do it that way?"
6. "I may as well go ahead and write up the order now. Is that all right with you?"
7. "Can we call this a deal, then?"
8. "That seems to cover every aspect of the deal. Suppose I make up the agreement and bring it by tomorrow. Will that be all right?"
9. "This seems to be an ideal situation for you. We've covered it from every angle. May I put the order in today so we can deliver it to you within two weeks?"
10. "I guess that's it. I'll go ahead and write up the order ~ unless you have any reason why I shouldn't."

The word “then” is used in some of these questions. It is a particularly appropriate word in this type of close. Used in this sense, it means “as a result of what we’ve been discussing.” It is similar to the word “therefore” ~ but much smoother. Its use indicates that the next logical step from where we are now is to close the sale.

Use whatever language and expressions will make the question smooth and comfortable for you.

Notice that the sample questions given here are all very straightforward. There are no subtle traps built into them. Closing isn’t a game of maneuvering your prospect into a corner. You are simply asking an honest and appropriate question.

Don’t play games with your prospect. You’ll lose such games many more times than you’ll win. No matter how you maneuver him, he still doesn’t have to buy unless he *wants* to. So you can play your game to the hilt and still not get the order. Always deal with him honestly and openly.

Cultivate the art of treating the interview objectively. Try to think in the way you’d think if you had no vested interest in the sale yourself. I don’t mean you should tell him you don’t care whether or not he buys ~ that would be a lie. But approach the matter in as calm and relaxed a state as possible. Don’t allow yourself to feel as if your whole future hinges upon the prospect’s next word.

Be fully prepared for the possibility that he may say “no,” find out why. Calmly and honestly, review step two of the interview ~ calling attention to what you’d thought were the qualifications of the sale. Ask him if you’ve understood him correctly.

If he agrees that you have understood what he wanted, go back to step three and review quickly how your product fulfills the qualifications established in step two. Then ask him where it is that your understanding of the situation has failed you. What is it that’s missing in the proposal?

When he answers you, bear in mind the *listen ~ agree ~ suggest* formula outlined in the last chapter. Even if you see that he’s simply misunderstood the terms, don’t fire back too quickly with the answer. Listen quietly; then acknowledge the value of his attitude; and then point out how the proposal will satisfy the question he’s raised.

There is one statement from prospects that seems to defy any possible answer. And that is, “I’ll have to think this over.” The popular tools for dealing with this reservation are woefully lacking.

For example, salesmen are told to act as if thinking it over would be a sign of weakness on the part of the buyer. But anything you do to make the buyer feel unjustified in having his own feelings will make him more determined to get out of the situation as fast as possible. In the process, you'll be taking his mind off the benefits of the proposition.

Salesmen are also told to prevent the prospect from "thinking it over" by making it appear as if the offer won't be available after today. This trick is so shopworn that most any prospect can see through it ~ yet it's still used in some absurd circumstances.

There *are* times when a particular offer is only temporarily available. Prices may be going up or you may not be selling from unlimited stock. If so, explain this in as relaxed a way as possible. You don't have to say, "I'm not trying to pressure you, *but . . .*" Just act in such a way that he *knows* you're not pressuring him. If you've been honest and believable and willing to put his interests first throughout the interview, he'll probably find it easy to believe you now.

To handle this "think it over" retort, recognize that there are four possible reasons that would prompt a prospect to say that. Let's deal with them one at a time:

1. *He's not convinced he wants what you're offering.* At the same time, he may not be convinced that he *doesn't* want what you're offering. He just isn't sure.

This is most likely the result of an inefficient presentation on your part. If you'd done your job correctly, he'd know ~ one way or the other ~ how he feels about your offer.

If you end the interview now and leave, you may as well forget about the prospect. There is no way that further thought on his part will bring him to an affirmative decision. He lacks the knowledge that this product will bring him what he wants. That won't come to him when he's by himself.

It's your job to apply the product's features to the prospect's motivations. If you don't do it during the interview, it won't be done.

If he says, "I'll think it over and let you know," and you believe he just isn't convinced, go back to steps one and two again. You can do it easily, without being awkward. Just say something like, "I have the feeling that I haven't really understood your situation properly. Could we take a couple of minutes more to go back and fill me in on some earlier points? Now, as I understood it, . . ." (resummarize as in step two).

Let this lead you into a repeat coverage of the material you should have learned in step number one. Then try step three again ~ but this time be sure you talk about *his* interests. If you do, you can save the sale.

Here is the second possible reason for his wanting to “think it over:”

2. *The prospect hasn't been completely honest with you.* This is a traditional sales problem. You've satisfied everything the prospect has *said* was important. But the prospect still says he'll “think it over” ~ because he doesn't want to reveal the real reason he's not buying.

Using the techniques of this book, you'll find that this will happen to you far less often than used to be the case. If you take an interest in the prospect and develop the ability to ask the right questions, you'll get a much larger proportion of honest answers.

But it can still happen. If you think it has, ask the prospect, “Is there anything you haven't told me that might help me to better understand your situation?”

If the prospect just won't give you the information you need, the only thing to do is cross him off your list and spend your time with someone more promising.

You'll run into some individuals who have difficulty defining and expressing their own motivations. You'll be amazed at the development of your own ability to help these individuals define their interests. After a few weeks of employing the techniques in this book, you'll be an old pro at helping people tell you what they want.

As a result, you'll even *welcome* those who have some difficulty doing so. You'll know how little satisfaction they get from other salesmen who *don't* understand them. Your ability to define motivations will give you a competitive edge.

But there will still be some hopeless cases ~ individuals who, after much cultivation, still don't make sense. They say what they want; you confirm it, satisfy it, and still don't get the order. Those are the individuals who probably have hidden reservations that they just aren't going to discuss with anyone. In that case, you can only hope you may have touched upon what was really important. But don't worry about it if you don't make the sale.

The third reason why the prospect may want to “think it over” is a more valid one, and is not as difficult to deal with as is commonly supposed:

3. *The prospect wants to “shop around” first.*

This is certainly an understandable attitude on his part. You may have recognized his motivation and presented a product or service that would satisfy it. But that doesn't necessarily mean there isn't some *other* product or service that would do *more* of that for the same amount of money ~ or would do the same for less money.

This is easy to see in selling automobiles. You may have what the prospect wants, but how does he know that someone else doesn't have it for less? To some extent, this consideration will apply in anything you may be selling.

Many salesmen live in fear of the prospect's wanting to "shop." It isn't that they're afraid their own products won't stand the comparison; they're afraid that once the prospect starts looking into all the alternatives, there will be no end in sight. And that's true. If a prospect is determined to check every possible alternative, he has an almost endless task.

Often the prospect is thoroughly confused by the time he has seen a half-dozen alternatives. Without an efficient salesman to help him identify his own standards, he finds himself comparing apples and oranges with no basis for comparison. Invariably, he winds up searching for the so-called "best buy" ~ not for the thing he personally wants the most.

I think you'll be surprised at how seldom you have to face that problem ~ once you start using the techniques in this book. For the truth about shopping is rarely recognized.

Most people don't like to shop. It's a tiresome chore. Remember the last time *you* went looking for a house or an apartment? The initial excitement wore off very quickly, didn't it? When you finally found something that *seemed* to fill the bill, you probably found it very easy to rationalize away its drawbacks, concentrate on its virtues, and *talk yourself* into making the purchase.

It's the same thing with furniture or automobiles or anything else. The salesman sees a picture of the all-powerful buyer with the money in his hand, exercising his power by going to every store in town before buying. But as for the buyer, all *he* can see are never-ending rows of furniture or automobiles, more getting in and out of the car at every stop, endless conversations with salesmen, etc.

I personally hate the process of looking for a new car, an apartment or just about anything else. The thought of having to make a second trip back to the dealer is always a pain. I'll seize upon any reason for making the deal right now. And, of all my friends, I can think of only one woman who relishes comparison shopping.

Why, then, *do* buyers insist on "shopping around?" Why don't they buy at the first store they visit?

Because they aren't being offered what they want. If the salesman were to take the time to be absolutely sure what it is the prospect wants, concentrate on presenting that and sincerely respect every consideration the buyer may have, he'd find that far fewer of his prospects would want to "think it over," or "shop a few more places first."

But most salesmen don't understand that. The salesman doesn't take the time to find out *why* the prospect is here in the first place, what it is he's trying to accomplish, what his requirements are for the purchase. Consequently, how could he hope to offer the prospect what he wants?

This leads to a further complication. By ignoring the prospect's motivations, the salesman will invariably introduce irrelevancies into the presentation. Whether or not he realizes it, he's suggesting that there are other things to consider besides the prospect's original standards. The prospect then thinks, "Hmmm. I didn't realize *those* things were important. I wonder what else there is that I don't know about. I'd better go to a few more suppliers and hear what they have to say."

So, by not concentrating on what the prospect wants, the salesman is defeating his own purpose on two counts. He's not offering the prospect what he wants, and he's leading the prospect to believe there may be other considerations he should look into before buying. In both ways, he's encouraging the prospect to shop.

If the salesman would just *shut up* and let the prospect tell him what he has to do to make a sale, he'd eliminate over half of the problems commonly associated with selling.

With all of these considerations, there will still be some prospects who have good reasons for wanting to check other alternatives before making a decision. The most significant of these are buyers who are spending money belonging to someone else. That includes advertising agencies or purchasing agents.

These people are being paid to discover all the alternatives that are available. It's not impossible for someone in that position to make a decision on the spot, but don't take it personally when it doesn't happen.

And, finally, the fourth reason why the prospect may want to "think it over" is also a valid one:

4. *The prospect is afraid he may be overlooking something.* The buyer may feel it's a very attractive offer, but he knows himself and is aware he may be just "carried away" right now. So he likes to take a day or two before making a big decision, just in case he's overlooked something important.

In this case, it isn't that the buyer expects to make his decision by thinking it over. Rather, he *believes* he wants to buy, but he knows he may later remember a negative factor that hadn't occurred to him during the sales interview. In other words, he wants a "cooling off period."

Even though this is an understandable attitude, a good salesman won't have to face it very often. As we saw in dealing with reason number three, it's often the salesman who leads the prospect to believe there may be something he's overlooking.

The buyer usually *wants* to buy. If the salesman would just get out of his way, most of the typical problems would disappear.

If the salesman has concentrated on defining the prospect's motivations and satisfying them, the buyer is *less likely* to feel that some important considerations may have been overlooked.

But it's still possible that the prospect would want that "cooling off period" before making a big decision. If that's the way it works out, and you're sure this is the reason, there's a course of action that's called for. (This same course of action applies if the prospect says he can't buy until a certain date and it's inappropriate to take the order now.)

First of all, get a very definite understanding of what is to happen. If the prospect says he's going to think it over, say, "Fine. How much time would you like?"

If the prospect says the decision will be made shortly, ask him when and on what basis. You'll be helping him to define what it is he's going to consider. And you won't leave the interview in the dark.

Never leave a sales interview without one of three things: (1) an order, (2) a definite "no" because you can't give the prospect what he wants, or (3) an understanding of when the prospect intends to make his decision and on what basis.

I'm amazed that so many salesmen are willing to make so many calls with so little understanding of what's in their prospects' minds. There's nothing worse than being in the dark about a prospect's thinking. And it's so easy to turn on the light. Just ask him!

After he's told you when he expects to make a decision, make it a point to call him halfway before that time arrives. Tell him you understand the call is premature, but you want to know if anything has come up in the meantime to alter the situation.

If you've treated him with respect, as a friend, a conversation will probably develop. In the course of the conversation, you may create the conditions necessary to make the sale. He may be tired of putting off the decision. Or perhaps a new insight into his motivation is now available. He may have done a lot of thinking *after* you helped him define his own objectives. Now he can let you in on that thinking, and the increased understanding may be all you need to sew up the sale.

If nothing has changed from his original plan, call him again at the appointed time. If he says he still hasn't made up his mind, remind him of his original intention. He'd felt that he wanted to make the purchase, but wanted to be sure that he wasn't overlooking any negative factors. If nothing has occurred to him in the meantime, it's now time to go ahead and execute the transaction.

So if the prospect asks for a cooling off period, react with a three-part plan: (1) find out when and how he will make the decision; (2) plan to call him half-way before the intended time; and (3) call him again if still necessary, at the appointed time.

We've seen four reasons why the prospect may tell you he wants to "think it over" before he makes a decision:

1. He's not convinced he wants what you're offering.
2. He hasn't been completely honest with you.
3. He wants to "shop around" first.
4. He's afraid he may be overlooking something.

You'll find the use of the five-step sales interview techniques will reduce considerably the number of times you have to face the "think it over" reaction. But when it *does* happen, determine which of the four reasons apply and then use the appropriate strategy outlined in the past few pages.

Closing the sale isn't difficult. You won't sell everyone you meet ~ but you certainly don't need to be afraid of anyone you face. If you've discovered, and appealed to, the prospect's motivation, closing will be simple and never awkward.

After a few weeks of using these techniques, you'll wonder why you ever allowed yourself to be in the dark about a prospect's attitude and intentions. You'll ask for any information you want. You'll be open and straightforward with your prospects ~ and you'll be surprised at how honest they'll be with you.

Before leaving the subject of closing sales, there's one final point that should be made. Strange as it may seem, it's easy to overlook this step of the sale in many cases. A salesman often fails to close a sale he's carefully nurtured.

For example, a prospect says, "Yes, this looks good to me. I think I'd like to institute such a program next month." The salesman leaves, happy to know he has a sale next month. But next month may never come because the salesman hasn't tied it down.

He should have replied, "Fine, I'll be glad to make up the order ~ and specify that the program is to begin next month." Or, if that isn't appropriate, the salesman should send a letter to the prospect, immediately after the interview, confirming the conversation. In it, he can say, "We are planning to go ahead with the program next month if we don't hear otherwise from you in the meantime."

Sometimes you take an order on the telephone. When you do, you should never leave anything to chance, to the possibility of a misunderstanding. So always confirm the conversation with a letter, sent the same day, if possible. Here's a sample format for such a letter:

Dear Mr. Jones:

Thank you for your time on the telephone Wednesday.
I'm writing this letter to summarize our conversation, and to be sure I haven't misunderstood you in any way.

We will deliver 379½ widgets to you next Tuesday. The color will be blue and they'll be the super-deluxe models. The price for these is \$1.17 per widget. As discussed, payment will be expected by the 15th of next month.

If any of the above is not in accordance with your understanding of our conversation, please call me right away.

Thank you again for your time and for the order.

In some way, you must tie down the fact that a sale has taken place ~ that the burden is now on the prospect to say "no" if he doesn't want the order. No salesman ever became rich on vague promises and "maybes."

This isn't difficult to see when money is being exchanged for a product. But these same principles apply no matter what kind of sale you're trying to make.

For instance, suppose you're trying to sell your boss a new idea you think would improve company conditions. If he says, "Yes, that sounds all right to me," don't walk out of his office, thinking your job is done.

Instead, ask for permission to do something that will confirm the fact that the idea has been accepted. For example, you could ask, "Will it be all right then if I prepare a memo for distribution to everyone in the office, informing them of this change?" Or you can ask, "Shall we make next Monday the first day of the new policy?"

In any event, you must tie down the fact that the policy has been accepted. Nothing has been accomplished by a vague approval. Turn it into concrete action ~ or else no sale has taken place.

Always close the sale. Never leave anything to chance or to "maybe." Assume that prospects may forget what they've ordered. Make sure there's always a signed order or a letter of confirmation. Never leave things on a verbal basis. Put it in writing.

We've covered a lot of ground in this chapter on closing. Perhaps we can sum it up in a few simple points:

1. Closing is relatively easy if you've handled the first four steps of the interview properly.
2. Closing is awkward, difficult, and loaded with conflict when you *haven't* properly covered the first four steps.
3. Develop a few simple closing questions ~ so you can use one of them as a comfortable way of initiating the close.
4. Relax about the situation. You'll get plenty of sales this month. Be open, honest, and unafraid with your prospect.
5. If the prospect offers an objection at this point, use the *listen - agree - suggest* technique outlined in the last chapter.
6. If the prospect says he wants to "think it over," determine which of the four reasons is behind it and react accordingly.
7. Above all, find out what your prospect is thinking and wanting. Don't wonder about anything. If there's something you want to know, ask about it. He isn't going to explode because of your question.

8. Don't play games with your prospect. Treat him with respect. He's not a little boy (unless your business is selling bubble gum).
9. Always tie down the sale with a signed order or a letter of confirmation. Don't leave anything to chance and don't count as sold anything that isn't tied down.

Closing is easy. It's only difficult when you fall into the trap of thinking of the sales interview as a war of words and nerves between you and the prospect. If you find out what he wants, and offer him what he wants, why would he ever resent your suggestion that he take advantage of it?

Chapter 16

WHAT IS A SALESMAN?

We've seen the five steps that go into the successful sales interview. They are:

1. Discover the prospect's motivation ~ what he wants, what he doesn't want, how he intends to get it.
2. Summarize the motivation so that the qualification for the sale is clearly understood between you.
3. Present your product solely in terms of the motivation he's described to you.
4. Answer any questions he may have and discuss any drawbacks he may see.
5. Close the sale by encouraging him to go ahead and get what he wants.

Obviously, the sequence of these steps is very important. You can't present your product until you know what the prospect is looking for. For if you do, you'll waste too much time, lose his attention, and fail to appeal to the element that would have caused him to buy.

Sometimes you may feel bullied into presenting your product in a hurry. For example, the prospect opens the interview by saying, "I don't have a great deal of time. But show me what you have."

This isn't difficult to handle. Just point out that your product is designed to do many different jobs. You don't want to waste his time talking about a lot of things that may not be of any importance to him. Instead, you'd prefer to know a little about that phase of his business that pertains to your product. Go right ahead with one of your key "discovery" questions, as suggested in chapter four. Say, "For example, does your company . . . ?"

If the prospect begins the conversation by asking you a question about your product, answer it ~ briefly but sincerely. Then say, “But before I go any further with my product, I’d like to get a better idea of how you’re handling this job now. I have no way of knowing whether or not our service would be profitable to you. For example, do you . . . ?”

If the prospect makes it clear that he’s in a big hurry, don’t fight it. You’re just throwing away the sale by trying to make a quick presentation of your product without any knowledge of his motivation.

Instead, tell him that it wouldn’t be fair to either of you to try to discuss in a few minutes a question of substantial importance to him. “When would be a better time for me to see you and learn more about your situation? I think we should probably allow 30 minutes. Would you have that time available tomorrow afternoon?”

The more experience you have with these techniques, the more you’ll recognize you should *never assume you know what the prospect’s motivation is*. Always ask. Even if you find you’ve guessed correctly, you’re still better off if the prospect verbalizes that motivation and you summarize it. That will make *him* more aware of the standards of the sale. And he will respond more readily when you ask for the order. So never let yourself be bullied into presenting your product before you’ve gone through steps one and two.

Selling is easy. You won’t sell everyone you meet. But by using these techniques, you’ll increase your closing percentages by a wide margin.

Most important, you’ll never again feel helpless. Even if you run into a string of “no sales,” you’ll have no reason to doubt yourself. You’ll be able to examine each interview and know *why* it was that each sale was lost. You can only do that if you’ve taken the trouble to find out what each buyer was looking for.

But those losing streaks will come far less often ~ for two reasons. First, you’ll be concentrating more on the real prospects and not spinning your wheels with those to whom you have nothing to offer. And, second, you’ll know better how to arrive at a deal with those who *are* prospects.

Selling is easy. Believe it or not, you now know everything you need to know to be a successful salesman. The whole secret of successful selling is encompassed in the simple rule: *Find this prospect’s motivation and appeal to it.*

The rest of this book will be devoted to further demonstrations of this rule and examples of its use in various situations.

Most salesmen never discover it. In fact, you can get a good idea of the worth of a salesman by his attitude toward selling. Let me give you an example of this ~ one that will, at the same time, give you an opportunity to see the five steps of the sale in one complete picture.

One particular sales interview from my own experience is appropriate because I was accompanied by a man who was recommended to me as a star salesman. His comments about the interview (which I'll pass on to you) convinced me that "star salesman" did not mean the same thing to the individual who had recommended him as it did to me.

I had created an employee education program that consisted of a series of folders, mailed twice-monthly to the homes of the employees of the subscribing company. I was now ready to market it.

The salesman referred to above, whom I will call John, was recommended by a friend as an ideal man to sell the service to companies in the Los Angeles area. We met and discussed it. I asked him if he'd like to come with me on a sales interview and he accepted the offer.

The next day we went to the office of an air-conditioning installation and maintenance company. After getting John's acknowledgment that he wouldn't intervene in the interview, we entered, asked for the president (with whom I had an appointment), and were ushered into his office.

I hadn't previously met the president. I opened the conversation by pointing out that I wasn't really sure what it was his company did. He explained it in a few minutes.

I then said, "Mr. Wayne, as you'll recall my mentioning on the phone, we've developed a new employee education program. Would you mind telling me what your experience has been with such programs?"

He then spent about 15 to 20 minutes, giving me his views on the subject. He told me of some of the things he had tried ~ all of which had failed.

He mentioned that he thought folders were worthless. "They don't read folders. They rather watch TV."

I agreed with him (even though my program consisted solely of folders). "You're right. I think the reason is that no one is going to bother reading something he knows will benefit his employer when there are more important things in *his* life ~ TV, bowling, reading magazines, or whatever."

He agreed with me. And he carried it further. He waxed for a few minutes on the fact that there was no such thing anymore as company loyalty. Employees didn't care about the employer's problems ~ *they only cared about themselves*. Again, I agreed with him.

After he had pretty well exhausted his views on the subject, I felt we were ready to move to step two. "I think we can agree then, Mr. Wayne, on a few basic principles involved in employee education. First, no employee is interested in his employer's well-being. He isn't going to read, watch, listen to, or to otherwise pay any attention to anything that's designed to make him do more for the company. Is that correct?" He agreed.

I went on. "So the only kind of program that could possibly be successful would be one that appealed to him entirely in terms of his own self-interest. Appeals to team spirit, loyalty, and the like would be fruitless. Somehow he has to be shown that he'll get more of what *he* wants by doing certain things that are also of value to the company. That's the big problem, isn't it?" Again, he agreed.

I was ready to move to step three. I explained briefly that we had used these very principles as our basic premises in developing a new employee education program. It was designed to show the employee how to get more of what he wanted in life.

Knowing his negative attitude toward folders, I acknowledged that he'd find it difficult to believe a successful program could be conducted through folders. "But," I said, "We finally decided on folders because they are the only medium that can reach the employee at home where he has time to think about the thoughts involved. Not only that, I'm convinced that the only problem with folders is that they must become important enough to *him* to want to read them."

It was now time to present my product. I introduced it in this way: "Mr. Wayne, you know your employees better than I do. Imagine right now that you're one of them. You're at home and your wife has just handed you the mail. In with the bills and advertisements, you find this . . ." I handed him a folder entitled "How to Get Ahead in Life." It was written wholly in terms of the employee's interest, showing him how he could make more money, earn promotions and have more of the things he wanted. It embodied all of the principles Mr. Wayne had agreed were important.

When he finished reading it, he said, "That's excellent. How much does it cost?" I explained how the pricing system worked and handed him another folder. He read it and had another good reaction.

We then moved into step four and he asked me a few questions. I explained how the program was handled.

He initiated step five by saying, “Well, that’s fine. I’d like to try it.” I told him all we needed was a check and a list of his employees. He called his secretary and obtained both within a few minutes.

If this interview seems too easy, if you feel I was lucky to find someone who wanted exactly what I was offering, you have a pleasant surprise coming. You’ll be surprised at how often prospects want what *you* have if you’ll let them tell you what they want.

Ten minutes later, John and I were at a nearby coffee shop, discussing the interview. “What’s your impression?” I asked.

“That was great. You let him hang himself.” I knew then that John wasn’t for me. I had let the prospect tell me what he wanted and made sure that he understood how the product fulfilled those desires. But John was used to thinking of the buyer as his opponent. And so he interpreted my handling of the interview as letting the prospect paint himself into a corner from which he couldn’t escape.

Poor John. He was destined to go through life thinking of sales as a life-and-death battle with adversaries across the desk from him. I imagine he has an ulcer by now, and he’s probably on the way to an early grave.

Selling is easy. It’s *always* easy if you think of the prospect as someone you’re trying to help. It becomes difficult when you think of your prospect as an adversary who must be out-manuevered.

I called the friend who had recommended John to me. I found that his qualifications were typical. He was a “real talker ~ you know, the kind that could sell ice boxes to Eskimos.” He’d made good money, all right ~ but it had come more from hard work than from a good grasp of selling. He worked long hours ~ often as much as 60 hours per week ~ to make a good living.

If he’d only had a more realistic picture of the buyer-seller relationship, he probably could have made the same living in 30 hours each week. It’s not unusual to find a “successful” salesman who has had to work himself into an early grave to achieve his success.

You’ll do yourself a favor if you try to forget everything you’ve heard regarding the characteristics of a star salesman. The picture of the glib talking, aggressive, fast-moving dynamo is a misleading one.

If you’ve ever been part of a sales force, I’m sure you’ve seen the “old-timers” sitting around, cigars in hand, reminiscing about their great sales triumphs. They talk

of the people they “took” and the way they’ve manipulated buyers into doing what they didn’t want to do.

These men live in a world of fantasy. Selling is not a con game; its a profession. And you can size up the merits of a salesman by the stories he tells. Ask a man what his greatest sale was. His answer will reveal his ability.

If he tells you about a “fast one” he put over on someone, he’s not really a salesman. But if he tells you about the hidden profit motive he was able to uncover in a buyer, you’re listening to the real thing.

No one ever buys anything he doesn’t want. If it appears that someone has bought something he doesn’t want, it’s only that we ~ as outsiders ~ don’t fully understand what the individual wanted. In fact, in the next chapter, we’ll see some examples of that.

A salesman doesn’t win by aggression and flamboyance; he succeeds by finding out what people want and helping them get it. So don’t be dismayed if you’re not the extrovert that others around you *seem* to be. *A salesman doesn’t have to be an extrovert to succeed* ~ contrary to the popular myths.

I’m sure that from outward appearances, I’d be considered an extrovert. I’ve given over a thousand lectures in my life, and I enjoy it immensely. But I doubt that it’s because I’m an extrovert. I think it’s because it’s the one way I *can* show off.

But I mostly prefer to stay to myself. I’d rather be home reading a book and listening to good music than dancing at a party. I have no interest in socializing or the swinging set.

I’d be scared to death of selling if it were all the things people say it is. I’d be afraid to enter a man’s office if I were expected to dominate him, to manipulate him, to overpower him and cause him to do something he didn’t really want to do. (As a matter of fact, I *was* afraid when I thought that was what I was supposed to do.)

But I have no trouble of that sort. I’m not afraid of anyone. Not because I think I can dominate anyone ~ but because I know now that I don’t have to do anything but understand the prospect and help him get what he wants.

What a difference this kind of attitude makes! Selling is easy ~ not frightening.

I used to try to convince myself I was an extrovert, a showman, a self-starter ~ all the things associated with the stereotyped salesman. One day I realized I was none

of those things. But I also realized I didn't have to be. Then success started coming my way.

Let me tell you, too, about a young girl named Valerie ~ in whom you might see some of yourself. I met her when I was setting up a special marketing program for a speed-reading school.

I was looking for student representatives at each of the major colleges in the area. I interviewed over 100 students, seeking about a dozen sales people.

Each student interviewed was asked to fill out a questionnaire. Its purpose was to gain some insight into the student's attitude toward salesmanship. One of the questions asked, "What is the most important element in making a sale?"

The answers I received ranged over the standard repertoire ~ enthusiasm, knowing your product, courtesy, hard work, believing in the product, etc. Valerie answered the question, "Understanding your prospect and helping him satisfy his desires."

When I interviewed her, she didn't look anything like a star salesman. Valerie was attractive ~ but obviously a quiet, reserved introvert. She was able to answer my questions fairly easily and concisely; but she didn't display the effervescence and enthusiasm I was used to seeing in the other job candidates.

Mostly on the strength of that one answer on the test, I hired her to be one of two representatives at her campus. I passed up several other girls who were more attractive and who had more of the outward characteristics commonly associated with salespeople.

My confidence in her was rewarded. She turned in a sterling performance ~ for she had the understanding that the other girls lacked.

I had been advised to hire the football stars, the student politicians and other celebrity-types from each campus. I passed them up, as well as the bubbling extroverts, and chose those who seemed to best understand what was involved in selling.

The sales force tripled the expected first month's sales volume, and my choices were vindicated. It isn't the loudest talkers or the fastest talkers or the extroverts who excel at selling. *It's the individual who recognizes that no one is going to buy anything he doesn't want.* That's the individual who will take the trouble to find out what it is that people want and help them get it.

The secret of successful salesmanship is very simple and universally-applicable:

Find this prospect's motivation and appeal to it.

And that means a salesman's job is not to change people, but to *help* people. *A salesman's job is to match up profit motives with products.*

He performs a service for his commission ~ *a service to both buyer and seller.* A salesman cannot profit unless he makes it possible for the buyer to profit.

So a salesman never has to feel guilty about the amount of money he makes. Every dollar he earns is a symbol of the satisfaction he has brought to a customer.

How could he possibly earn too much money? That would be like saying he's helped too many people.

Selling is easy and profitable and noble.

Chapter 17

SELLING IN THE REAL WORLD

As I've been saying over and over in this book, the world of selling is full of myths and misconceptions. Many people (including most salesmen) have false pictures of how products and services are sold.

In this chapter, I'd like to concentrate on three of the popular fallacies regarding selling. They are representative of the many myths that circulate. The first one we've touched on already:

Fallacy #1: "The salesman must sell someone something he doesn't want."
We've discussed this cliché from several angles already, but let's bury it once and for all with a classic example . . .

Sam Jones lives on your block. One day while you're out front, mowing your lawn, Sam walks by on his way to the drug store. He stops and you talk for a few minutes.

In the course of the conversation, Sam asks, "Did you hear about Howie White gettin' took by one of those encyclopedia salesmen? Yeah, he wound up spending \$300 on a set. Boy, you'll never catch me gettin' stuck with a set of books. Matter of fact, I hear the salesman's still in the neighborhood. Hope, for his sake, he doesn't come to my house. He'd never sell me anything in a million years!"

Three days later, you find out that the salesman did indeed call on Sam Jones. And (yes, you guessed it) Sam bought the encyclopedia. Not only that ~ he bought the deluxe set with all the extras, for over \$400!

Now, after what Sam told you, it's reasonable to assume that he bought something he didn't really want. But did he?

If the salesman had walked up to Sam's door and simply asked him if he wanted to buy a set of books, certainly Sam would have said no ~ very emphatically. But, obviously, the salesman didn't do that. Maybe Sam didn't want to buy a set of

books. But there were a lot of things in this world Sam *did* want. And it's just possible that some of them could have been provided *through* a set of books. Let's take one of several possibilities as an example.

Suppose the salesman arranged with Sam's wife to come back during the evening and discuss with the Jones' some possible aids to their son's education.

When the salesman opened the conversation with, "Tell me about your local school system, Mr. Jones," he didn't realize what he was getting into. Sam talked for over an hour about it. It happens that Sam Jones isn't very happy with the local schools.

He went on about the over-emphasis on non-academic subjects ~ how his child was getting too little of reading and history and geography and mathematics and science, and too much of social living and hygiene, etc. He told how he and his wife had fought for several years to get new members elected to the local school board. They'd spent literally thousands of dollars and hundreds of hours of their time to try to improve the situation.

When they finally managed to elect some sympathetic board members, they found the system was too entrenched to be changed.

Sam told of the endless number of PTA meetings, school board hearings, campaign meetings, and on and on and on. Now, their son was 13 and six years of trying to improve the situation hadn't helped at all.

Sam's wife told of the special tutoring she'd tried to give her son on various hard-core academic subjects. But it hadn't done much good because she wasn't too good at these subjects herself.

Sam said he wished he could send his child to a private school ~ but the cost would be at least \$75 per month for one that would be good enough to make a difference. And he just didn't have that kind of money.

He acknowledged that through the years they'd probably spent enough money on educational reform to put their son through private school for one year. But that money was already gone now and there wasn't any way to swing a private education for him.

The salesman listened attentively ~ occasionally asking questions and commenting on some of their findings. When it appeared that the Jones' had pretty well told the whole story, he moved into step two of the interview. He probably said something like: "What's needed, then, is some way to provide your son with the

education he's missing ~ but at a cost far less than \$75 a month. Isn't that about the size of it?"

Of course, he had no trouble getting agreement upon that point. And so he was ready to move into step three ~ the presentation of his product, which was *not* a set of encyclopedia; *it was a supplementary education for their son.*

He introduced them to a programmed learning course that is keyed to the encyclopedia. Their son would make up all the missing subjects, with assistance from his parents.

In addition, there were also smaller, supplementary sets of textbooks ~ dealing with science, history and other subjects. They could add those if they wanted to.

And the cost of all this was only \$20 per month for two years ~ far less than the \$75 per month they felt they couldn't afford. Not only that, they could forget about attending all of the meetings and hearings, forget about the fruitless election campaigns and speeches. Now they didn't have to change the system. They had everything they needed already.

Not surprisingly, the salesman got the order.

Did Sam Jones buy what he didn't want? No, of course not. He didn't want a set of books ~ and he didn't buy one.

As a matter of fact, the next time you see him, you ask him. "Say Sam, I hear you bought a set of books just like Howie did."

He'll tell you, "Heavens no. I bought a good education for my son ~ just like I've been trying to do for the past six years."

This story could be retold in a dozen different settings. The moral is simple: *A salesman cannot change a buyer's desires; he can only demonstrate better methods of satisfying them.*

No one changed Sam Jones' mind. The salesman simply made it a point to find out what was *on* Sam's mind. Then he showed him a newer, more efficient, less expensive way of getting what he wanted.

The second fallacy to be discussed comes from the same poisoned well. It springs from the idea that the seller controls the transaction ~ when, in reality, the buyer is making the decision and so *he* controls the outcome. The seller influences the outcome by making sure that what he's offering is demonstrably profitable to the buyer.

Fallacy #2: “The salesman can improve his results through ‘positive thinking!’”

“Positive thinking” is a term that has been used to cover a multitude of meanings ~ some good and some bad. But I believe even the good uses have been overrated and the bad ones are positively dangerous.

Let’s look at the good ones first. If you make it a point to remind yourself not to be afraid of any prospect you’re going to meet, you’re doing yourself a favor.

And if you have a big job ahead of you, and not much enthusiasm for plowing through it, it helps to remind yourself that the only way it’ll ever get done is to put one foot in front of the other and get started.

But these simple forms of positive thinking are obvious and relatively meaningless. There are, however, some unrealistic ideas paraded under the banner of positive thinking.

Suppose I’m coming to your home to present a product to you for your consideration. I stand outside your front door and say to myself, “This person is going to buy. This person is going to buy. This person is going to buy.”

And suppose I get carried away and say it aloud. The front window is open and you overhear me. What would your reaction be? Would *you* believe I know what I’m talking about when I say, “This person is going to buy,” and “this person” happens to be *you*?

It’s easy to see how little control I have over the sale when *you’re* the buyer. But how does it change when the roles are reversed? Why mislead yourself into thinking some magical formula repeated over and over again in your brain will somehow make *me* buy what *you’re* selling?

It won’t. I’m a self-motivated human being, the same as you are ~ and the same as the rest of your prospects are. To sell me something, you must offer something profitable to me ~ not create the right thought waves.

The “positive thinkers” are saying, in effect, that your mind controls the minds of others ~ that everyone else in this world can be a slave to your mental attitude.

That’s dangerous. Not dangerous to your prospects ~ they could care less. They won’t be affected by your thoughts, whether or not you realize it.

But it’s dangerous to *you*. For it leads you to concentrate on things that are totally irrelevant to the sale. Your time and attention shouldn’t be devoted to putting

the right thought waves into the air. Spend the time investigating the motivations of your prospects ~ so you can deal with them as they are, not as you would mentally like to remake them.

Positive thinking is nothing more than wishing. It's a futile attempt to change reality by wishing it were different from what it is. It's an effort to get something for nothing ~ to be able to make sales without having to go to the trouble of satisfying your customers.

A similar hopeless irrelevancy is the "expect the best" attitude. Why? Simply expect that the real world will be as it is. And then find out what that is.

If you depend upon things going your way, you'll be in very bad shape if they don't. When you recognize that someone may not choose to buy from you, you aren't making it any more likely that he'll turn you down. Quite the contrary. If you realize that he *can* turn you down, you'll be more likely to do what's necessary to reduce the chances of his doing so.

The positive thinkers attribute every setback to a loss of confidence. They work harder and harder to develop the "right" mental attitude ~ thinking that success will come as soon as they can imagine it correctly.

Why not spend the same time and effort looking at the real world to find out what others want from you? That way you can make sure you're providing the services that are necessary to bring you success.

Whenever you make an important decision of any kind, ask yourself what is the worst thing that can happen. Then hedge against it. Be prepared to handle it ~ just in case that worst actually happens. Once you're prepared, you can relax and go ahead ~ unafraid of what might happen.

Don't *assume* that the worst will happen. Don't even *expect* it. Just be *prepared* for it. If you are, you'll never have to spend the rest of your life paying off the mistakes of the present.

So don't base your budget on that big sale you're *going* to make. Base it on the way things are now. And get to work learning everything you can about the motivations of the prospect involved in that big sale. And when you've made the sale, come home and throw away the old budget. Sales are always sweeter when you haven't already spent the commission.

The common denominator of these first two fallacies is the idea that the salesman controls the sale. He doesn't. The buyer controls the purchase. And the

salesman who concentrates on the buyer, instead of himself, will find that more purchases will be made.

And this brings us to our third fallacy, not too far removed from the other two:

Fallacy #3: "There are certain basic motivations in everyone. Appeal to his fears, his desire for love, or his hope of reward."

I've heard that fallacy many times. It's helpful in that it calls attention to the fact that a motivation within the prospect must be appealed to. But it's meaningless when it tries to tell you *what* motivation to appeal to.

The only way you can find out what the prospect will respond to is by asking him. Don't assume anything. Don't generalize on motivations.

One of the dangers in this fallacy is the implication that you can create the emotion in the prospect. In other words, you think that by startling the prospect with certain facts, you can create a fear that must be relieved by purchase of the product (insurance, protection, etc.). That's not true. If the fear is already there, the prospect may respond. If it's not, you're not likely to create it in one interview.

Whatever your product, make a list of all of the possible applications of it ~ the many different benefits that *might* be important to someone. Then create a series of questions that help you determine which of the benefits are important to any given prospect.

The only time you should attempt to outguess your prospect is when you're required to give a presentation to a group. Even then, try to devise a way of going around the room, asking leading questions of the prospects ~ finding out what's important to them. But if you can't do that, your only recourse is to base your presentation upon the things you believe will be most meaningful to them. Naturally, your closing percentage will be considerably less that it would be if you could deal with each individual's motivation.

Any time you have the opportunity to talk to your prospect individually, follow the five step procedure ~ beginning with the discovery of what this individual human being wants in his life.

The three fallacies discussed in this chapter are just a drop in the bucket of dozens of sales techniques that have been repeated through the years to thousands of salesmen.

How can you tell if a sales technique suggested to you is worthwhile or just another fallacy like the ones we've looked at here? In the last chapter, I mentioned

that you can get a good idea of the worth of a salesman by the stories he tells. If he tells you of people he controls, you know he lives in Fantasyland. But if he tells you of ways he was able to uncover the buyers' motivations and desires and requirements, then he lives in the real world.

In the same way, there's a similar standard by which you can evaluate the worth of any sales technique that's offered to you. If its apparent objective is to give you more control over the prospect, to change *him* in some way, it's probably worthless.

On the other hand, a realistic technique will be one that's aimed at a realistic objective. For instance, a good sales technique might be designed to be:

1. A way of determining more quickly who is truly a prospect and who isn't.
2. A way of better understanding what the prospect has in mind.
3. A way of helping the prospect talk more about himself.
4. A way of letting the prospect know you aren't trying to overpower him.
5. A way of helping the prospect visualize how the product or service affects his own stated interests.
6. A way of asking for the order as a natural conclusion to the sales interview.

This list by no means indicates *every* possible realistic objective of a sales technique. But it's enough to give you the idea.

Selling is finding out what the prospect wants and showing him how he can get it. If a suggested technique relates to that, give it consideration. But if it's aimed at ruling other people's lives, don't waste any time on it.

Yes, it's true that *occasionally* someone makes a sale by scaring a prospect ~ or by shaming him ~ or by appealing to his sympathy for the salesman ~ or by lying to the prospect ~ or by some other scheme. But such sales are few and far between ~ and very difficult to make. Why bother trying?

Selling is easy ~ if you go about it the easy way. Find out what your prospect wants and show him how to get it. You'll save hours of time, pints of perspiration, and 3 ½ ulcers by doing it that way.

And if you get rich in the process, I doubt if you'll complain.

Chapter 18

EVEN TELEPHONING IS EASY?

To many salesmen, the telephone is a fearful instrument. And that's no surprise. Telephoning can be a tiresome task. Your ear gets warm and tired ~ and you find that the frequent rejections do discourage you, no matter how hard you try to keep an optimistic frame of mind.

I'm not going to tell you that telephone selling and prospecting should be enjoyable ~ although there are times when it is. There were many times when I spent entire days on the telephone, selling advertising, and the time went so fast I was surprised to see the end of the day come so soon. But I've also had my share of days when nothing went right, when I gave up and quit early, and when I wondered if it were all worth while.

Through it all, I have been able to find only one solution to the problem: *become more efficient at it.* The better you are at telephoning, the less time you have to spend at it to get the job done. And you usually enjoy it more if things are going well. So it all comes back to improving your ability on the telephone.

The telephone can be used for two different purposes: getting an appointment or making a sale. Most salesmen would be surprised to know how much business can be closed on the telephone. I'll come back to that a little further along.

Whichever purpose you have in mind ~ an appointment or a sale ~ you still improve your chances when you work within the five-step procedure we've been discussing in this book. First let's apply the procedure to the job of getting an appointment.

Treat the phone call as the very first phase of the first step of the sales interview. Your job at the outset is to demonstrate to the prospect:

1. That his satisfaction is the criterion for the sale;

2. That you don't know enough about his business, or his life, to determine whether or not what you have will be profitable to him; and
3. That you'd appreciate his giving you some background on his objectives, his present methods, etc.

In chapter 4, we saw a way of opening the in-person interview if you were selling a bookkeeping service. Let's suppose you're trying to gain an appointment for such an interview. Your approach on the telephone would be almost the same:

"Mr. Jones, I'm with the Red Ink Bookkeeping Service. We've developed some pretty interesting new ideas to help clients save time and money; but I have no way of knowing if these ideas would be profitable in *your* business. Would it be possible for me to come by and have you fill me in on your present situation? That way, if there's anything available to improve your situation, I can offer it to you."

Most salesmen would try foolishly to convince the prospect on the phone that the service *would* be profitable to the prospect. But how can the salesman know that? The buyer knows how unique he is; he doesn't believe a salesman at the other end of the line can know what's good for him.

Don't ever be afraid to be honest or realistic or humble. Those qualities *get* appointments for you; they don't lose them.

In the example given, the statement has encompassed the three objectives listed on the last page. You've demonstrated that the buyer's satisfaction is the standard, that you don't know enough about his business to make snap judgments, and that you'd like to acquire the necessary background.

In order to handle the situation smoothly, have several basic opening questions in mind. Give some thought to your prospect before dialing ~ so you can isolate the proper approach for what you know of this individual.

You may decide to use the telephone to complete step one of the sale. By getting the information about the prospect's motivation now, you'll have time to tailor step three (the presentation of your product) to his specific situation.

If you handle it this way, don't forget to begin the in-person interview with step two ~ summarizing your phone conversation. Ask him if there's anything he'd like to add to that before you go on.

In using step one on the phone, your approach should be the same as it would be if you were talking to him in person: "Mr. Jones, I'm anxious to see if our service can be profitable to you. But I know very little about your business. I wonder if

you'd fill me in on some things. Would it be convenient for you if I ask some questions right now? Then, if it appears I have something profitable for you, we could set up an appointment."

This may be the wrong time for him to talk. He may be on his way to an appointment or perhaps there's someone in his office or maybe the other phone is ringing. Be sure to ask him if this is a convenient time. If it isn't, there's no point in trying to monopolize his attention; you're just hurting your own case.

As a matter of fact, this is a very important rule to remember when telephoning anyone: *Never start the conversation until you've asked if he has time to talk to you.* There's nothing more aggravating than being in a hurry to do something while a salesman takes his time with *your* time. Don't ever be guilty of that.

"Mr. Jones, this is Harry Browne. I'd like to ask you a couple of questions. Do you have a minute right now?" or "Have I caught you in the middle of something?" or "Is there a more convenient time for me to reach you?" or "Is this a bad time for you?"

Forget all the old sales superstitions about positive and negative questions. There's an old cliché that says you should never ask a question the prospect can answer with "no." That's ridiculous. That's based upon the idea that selling is some sort of game you play *against* your prospect. It's not. You won't sell him anything if you have nothing that will help him. And monopolizing his time at the *wrong* time or being rude or disregarding his other obligations ~ these things will simply make it harder for him to see that you're interested in helping him.

Even though the prospect has the opportunity to say "no," I very seldom get that as a reply. Occasionally, someone will say, "Yes, I do have someone in my office right now." To that, I'll reply, "Then don't let me bother you now. When would be a good time for me to call again?"

When I call back, the prospect will often apologize for having put me off. Very rarely do I miss getting the conversation I want.

Don't be afraid of being honest with the prospect or of giving him the chance to be honest with you.

Every once in a while I forget to ask someone I'm calling if this is a convenient time to talk. But those are the rare exceptions. Even personal calls should be governed by that rule. "Did I catch you in the middle of dinner?" or "Do you have company right now?" or "Is this a good time for you to talk?" or "Do you have a minute?"

Never allow yourself to be someone who is tolerated. If you respect the time and interests of your friends, associates, and prospects, they will usually respect *you* a lot more. And one important reason is *that so few other people will show them that kind of respect*.

If you're calling consumers at home, relax. Don't fight them. If a housewife tells you you're the fourth salesman to call this morning, just say, "Boy, there sure are a lot of salesmen around. I'm sorry that your morning is being interrupted. I'd just like to ask you a couple of questions; and if this isn't something that would be profitable for you, I'll get off your phone in a hurry."

Do it with a smile. You're on *her* side, remember. You're not there to ram something down her throat. If you feel you *must* force your product on her, start selling something else ~ you'll make more money.

The same general principles apply with secretaries. There is an age-old conflict between salesmen and secretaries. The salesman tries to get by the secretary without imparting any more information than he can avoid. The secretary, meanwhile, believes her entrance to the Kingdom of Heaven will depend upon the number of salesmen she has prevented from using her boss's time.

This conflict manifests itself in all kinds of sparring and game-playing between the two of them. The salesman tries to act as if he were an old friend of the prospect or, in some other way, tries to bypass the normal channels.

What's the answer to all this? It's simple. Just be honest and straightforward with the secretary and you'll be a breath of fresh air to her.

"Hi. I'm Harry Browne, an investment counselor. I have some ideas about Mr. Wilson's investment program. Is this a good time to reach him?"

Or "Good morning. This is Harry Browne of the Bad Debt Collection Service. We have a new service that might prove very profitable for Mr. Wilson ~ but I need to know more about his situation. Is he in now?"

If he's not available right now, enlist her help. "Perhaps you can give me some of the information I need. Do you have a minute right now?" Then ask some of the opening questions of your list. Almost invariably, you'll come to a question she can't answer ~ and often she'll say, "You'd better talk to Mr. Wilson about that."

Ask her for any help you need. Instead of fighting her, let her know she's important to you. Don't say it, but let her know by your words and actions.

Most of the sting of telephoning disappears when you're not fighting the person at the other end of the line. You'll still run into someone who's rude occasionally. But just remind yourself that it's *his* problem, not yours. Relax and deal with each person as if he were a friend of yours. And you'll find that the tension will disappear.

Telephoning is still a job. There's no way to avoid that. But it doesn't have to be the arduous task most salesmen consider it to be.

Again, the best way to beat the phoning game is to be so good at it you finish your work in less time. Use the techniques outlined in this chapter and you'll find you get your appointments much faster.

One other point should be recognized. It's possible to close sales on the telephone. If you've already gone through the first four steps of the sales interview, don't be afraid to close the sale on the phone. It may be a follow-up to a previous call or you may have conducted the entire interview on the telephone. In either case, if you feel the prospect knows enough to see the proposition as profitable to him, go ahead and close the sale.

Remember, the prospect has just as much reason as you do to want to close the sale without another appointment. He may welcome the opportunity to get the deal taken care of right now.

If you make the sale, either send him a letter of confirmation or drop by his office the next day with an order to sign. Don't forget that the sale must be tied down in some way (as pointed out in chapter eight).

Once you relax and get used to the telephone as a money-maker, it can do a great deal for you. It will save you hours of driving time, as well as hours of interviews with unqualified prospects.

When I sold advertising in business publications, I found I could do so well on the phone that I actually had to push myself to get out of the office and make in-person calls. Many sales were closed over the telephone with prospects I never saw. Often, I made several phone calls to an individual, sending literature by mail in between calls. I found that I could cover far more ground than the salesman who religiously called in person on every prospect. Too often, appointments weren't kept by the prospects or long minutes were spent in waiting rooms.

I'm not suggesting that you give up your present way of doing business and concentrate on the telephone. But if you use an honest approach on the phone, you may find it can do more for you than you thought it could. You can then determine the best balance between telephoning and personal calls.

Chapter 19

THE CARE AND FEEDING OF CUSTOMERS

A man who's been honest with his prospects never has to worry about what his customers will think of him. There is nothing that can happen that will be a refutation of what the salesman has said.

So if the customer has a problem with the product later, the salesman doesn't have to think of it as a reflection upon himself. Nothing is foolproof in this world ~ and if the salesman did not promise more than he could realistically deliver, he has nothing to be afraid of.

When something goes wrong, acquaint the customer with the alternatives available to him and let him know you'll be quite willing to help him take advantage of any of these alternatives. If the product is covered by a guarantee, let him know exactly what he's entitled to.

It's amazing how much honesty increases both your sales volume and your peace of mind. The honest salesman finds his job to be so much easier than the salesman who always says what he thinks will sound best.

The honest salesman doesn't walk around with that terrible feeling in the pit of his stomach. He has nothing to fear ~ because he's done nothing that might come back to haunt him.

In the same way, a friend of mine ~ Ron Ward ~ sells school buses for a living. He has said, "I always try to keep in mind the possibility that I might someday want to go to work for my competitor. If I ever do, I want to be sure I can go back to every customer without having to refute anything I've said in the past. And I believe I can; I've never said anything I couldn't agree with if I were working for my competitor."

Ron is one of the highest-paid salesmen I know. I've never had the impression that honesty is just a stoic virtue that one practices in opposition to his own self-interest. In reality, it's an asset ~ a way of getting more business and of making salesmanship a much easier job.

And I don't believe you can be honest on a part-time basis. You're either honest or you're not. You can't be honest with your prospects if you're not honest with your wife. It's a talent that has to be developed, just like public speaking or playing golf.

If you don't believe this, try a little test sometime. Observe every one of your own statements for 15 minutes. Pick a 15-minute period when you'll be in a conversation with someone. Anyone. Your wife ~ a prospect ~ a friend ~ a business associate.

Every time you make a statement, check yourself. Did you say what you believed would put you in the best light? Or did you speak the absolute truth even if it put you in a worse light? You'll be surprised, I think, at the results of this test. No one but you will know the results, so you might as well be honest with yourself.

Fifteen minutes isn't a very long time. If you find yourself stretching the truth even once during that period, imagine how many times during an entire day you do it.

Despite what anyone might say, it's easier to fib than to be 100% honest. You have to work at being honest; it requires training and consistency. It just isn't possible to be truly honest in the situation where it pays to be ~ unless you've cultivated the habit of being honest all the time.

You *can* be honest, if you choose. Pick another 15-minute period and resolve to tell nothing but the truth during that period ~ even if it feels uncomfortable. Then stretch it into 30 minutes, then an hour. You have to be conscious of what you're doing or you can lapse into the same old habit of fibbing without realizing it.

If you can make your periods of conscious awareness longer and longer, pretty soon you'll have made honesty a habit. There will be plenty of times you'll feel a little uncomfortable for telling the truth. But you'll soon come to realize how little inconvenience it actually causes you. Most of the supposed drawbacks of honesty never come about.

But so what? Why bother? What's the point? It's simply that you'll make more money and enjoy selling much more (not to mention benefits in other parts of your life) once you make honesty a habit.

The cultivation of honesty usually leads to a further ramification. If you find a particular element in your product or service is a drawback to your sales, there's always the temptation to lie about it or to act as if it didn't exist. But why not do what you can to *change* it? That way you won't have to be afraid of it anymore.

Even if you're a new car salesman and your brand of car is having a recurring mechanical problem this year, you don't have to feel helpless. Go to your employer; he knows about the problem too. Suggest that he put in writing a special guarantee that this problem will be corrected by him if it should ever occur.

Then, if a prospect says he's heard about this problem, you can say, "Yes, that's true. We've had some problems of that kind with a few of the cars. Actually, it's been a very small number of cars ~ but we don't want you to have to take that risk. So we've supplemented the factory guarantee with one of our own. Here's a copy of it. That way you can have all the benefits of the new 1970 Hudson without having anything to worry about." Once you've decided to be honest, you have a much greater incentive to correct the uncomfortable elements in your proposition.

The same thing applies in other phases of your life. If you know you're no longer going to try to lie your way out of trouble, you make sure that you don't do the things that you wouldn't want to admit to later. You find that life becomes a lot simpler since you're no longer trying to keep all your tracks covered.

Some people use their sympathy for others as a justification for dishonesty. "After all," they say, "It's kinder to lie to someone than to insult him." But why equate honesty with insults? You don't have to volunteer insults. If someone asks for your opinion, give it ~ but point out that it's only your opinion; someone else might see it differently.

Many times I've seen a friend or associate lie to someone else in my presence. I always wonder how that person can believe I'll expect him to tell the truth to *me* ~ when he's lied to someone else in front of me? Again, you can't be honest on a part-time basis and get away with it.

If you believe it just isn't possible to be totally honest in your business, there's either something wrong with the business you're in or something wrong with you. Find out which it is and make the necessary changes.

How honest should you be about your competitor's products? Should you tell the prospect the unfavorable things you know about your competitor's product? *If you are asked*, you should be honest. But don't make your answer any more certain than you really are. And don't bother going into areas that are of no interest to this prospect.

If you've followed our five-step procedure, it may never be necessary to discuss competition ~ for there won't be much. But if it comes up, discuss the competitor as you would your own product ~ *in terms of the considerations raised in step one of the interview*. Don't go beyond that ~ you don't have to.

Acknowledge that he may want to look into these matters for himself. You can even suggest ways he can get the answers to any such questions. But don't ever be pompous or superior when discussing a competitor's product. If he's been in business any length of time, he *must* be doing good things for some people. You'll only make yourself look ridiculous if you indicate he's all bad and you're all good.

One last point with regard to honesty: *Never tell a prospect you're honest.* It's a meaningless statement. Even a liar would say, "I wouldn't lie to you" ~ so why bother making a statement that has no authority?

Instead, demonstrate your honesty in the things you do and the way you deal with the matters at hand. In the same way, don't try to *tell* the prospect you have a sincere interest in helping him. Don't say, "I sincerely want to help you, Mr. Jones." Demonstrate your sincerity and your interest in the way you handle the interview.

Go through the five steps of the interview in sequence, using the techniques outlined in this book, and your prospect (in *most* cases) will believe very strongly in your integrity, your honesty, and your sincerity. And he'll be happy to recommend you to others. But let *him* discover these things ~ don't try to tell him.

And when you *are* these things selling is easy. All of the terrible and difficult tasks associated with selling disappear.

The salesman who's honest with his customer and *does* provide a profitable service to him doesn't usually have to "wine and dine" him to keep his business. He can let his competitors waste their money on those things. All a good salesman has to do is see to it the customer is profiting from the salesman's services ~ and the account should be secure.

There are apparent exceptions to this. Sometimes the motivation of a minor official in a company *is* to be "wined and dined." To him, that's more important than seeing that the company's money is wisely spent. If you determine that to be the case, you'll have to choose between dropping him as a prospect or acceding to his wishes.

You'll find the examples of that become rarer as you get closer and closer to the top of a given company. The closer a man is to spending his own money, the more rational he'll be in handling that money.

If you sell to consumers, you'll find they usually like to be treated with respect, but their motivations are usually something more rational than the desire to be "wined and dined."

But suppose you treat the prospect rationally and he *doesn't* respond? If you find that your efforts to appeal to the apparent profit motive of your prospect are

hitting a stone wall, stop and reappraise the situation. It can only mean you haven't properly identified the dominant motivation.

For example, some people feel they don't get enough attention in life. So they use their purchases as a way of commanding the attention of salespeople. In a case like that, it can mean the prospect will buy from the person who fawns on him the most. Or it can mean he won't buy until he's talked to several salespeople ~ to get as much attention from the purchase as possible.

This isn't an exception to our sales principle. It simply means the motivations of some people are a little unusual. But those motivations must be gratified for the sale to be made. Whether or not you choose to do so is entirely up to you. You're not a slave to anyone. You don't *have* to appeal to anyone's motivation. In some cases, the commission may not be worth the effort. But it won't do you any good to ignore the motivation or pretend it's something other than what it is.

The salesman who is honest and valuable to his customers will not have to engage in the normal entertainment practices to get business and to hold onto his customers. Those are only substitutes for the salesman's *real* job ~ to provide the client with what he wants.

You'll quickly become a friend to your customer. Not because you attempt to make friends with him away from the office, but because you're a source of aid to him. You're one of the rare individuals who truly understands an important facet of his life.

Check in with him periodically to be sure the service you sold him is still doing its job correctly. Look for opportunities to be of further service with additional products ~ or to get referrals to his friends who may have similar needs.

If you want further business from him, never take him for granted. There have been other salesmen in his office since you made your last sale. They may have something valuable to offer him, too. It's possible for him to forget how helpful you've been.

The care and feeding of customers is not a difficult job. Just be yourself ~ but make sure you have something profitable to offer. Don't waste your time and money trying to make up in booze and dinners what you should have provided in good service.

Selling is easy. Don't complicate it.

Chapter 20

THE ELIMINATION OF FEAR

If you've ever seen the famous play or movie *The Death of a Salesman*, you know what a scared salesman looks like. There's a great deal in Arthur Miller's story that reveals elements of the selling world that don't have to be.

Some salesmen have been scared during their entire selling careers. By the time they reach forty they look like sixty, their hands shake, they drink more than regularly, and they're headed for early graves.

These poor fellows have never learned that selling is easy. They've been fighting an uphill battle to succeed in the stereotyped manner ~ by being aggressive, smooth talking, and all of the other characteristics we've seen are false.

Fear can be dangerous. There's nothing wrong with being honestly concerned about a peril you may face. This translates itself into the emotion we call fear. It includes a fast pulse rate, sweaty hands, stomach pains, shaking. If it happens occasionally in your life, there's nothing wrong.

But to be afraid of your prospects every day is truly dangerous. For it means you can't possibly live as long as you should, you'll develop an ulcer, you won't be an attractive husband or successful father, and you'll probably be a pretty bad salesman to boot.

How, then, do you conquer fear?

You don't. The greatest mistake you can make is to try to "shut it off" ~ to tell yourself that you won't be afraid. That is self-defeating.

The only way to eliminate fear is to remove the conditions that cause it. There may be some things in life that an individual is irrationally afraid of that can only be cured through psychotherapy ~ but that's not usually the salesman's problem.

In the salesman's case, the answer is to approach his work in such a way that he loses any reason to fear. In other words, once he finds out his prospects aren't going to destroy him, aren't going to kick him out of their offices, aren't going to make him go hungry, etc. ~ in that case, the salesman no longer has any reason to be afraid.

And the easy way to make sure you have nothing to fear, is to follow the procedures set forth in this book. If you're seeking the profit motives of your prospects and appealing to those motives, what is there to fear? People will like you ~ people will buy from you ~ people will respect you ~ and there'll always be food on the table.

If you have a problem with fear, my advice is to ignore it for the time being. Don't tell it to go away; it won't. But ignore it. Don't worry about it ~ don't keep looking to see if it's gone yet. Concentrate, instead, on developing your proficiency at discovering profit motives and appealing to them.

One day you'll probably remember that you were once fearful. And it'll suddenly dawn on you that it disappeared while you were preoccupied with your work. You didn't even notice it leave.

That's the only way fear will leave you ~ by your becoming a good salesman who has nothing to be afraid of. Don't try to put the cart before the horse.

In fact, everything said in this book points to the single word *relax*. Relax about your prospects, your success. Anyone who develops the ability to spot motivations will always make a good living in this world.

Relax. When you're sitting in your prospect's home or office, relax. Don't be afraid that every word said is the final answer to everything. Learn to observe impersonally what is going on ~ including yourself. If the prospect says, "I don't want to buy," and you know it's final, don't panic. There may be another prospect right next door.

I remember an experience that illustrates this. I was selling investments and things were going poorly in the field I was in. Prospects were few and far between and my bills were mounting up. All of a sudden, a little old lady I knew wanted to make a large purchase. The immediate commission was around \$1,000 ~ plus residual profits later on. Needless to say, I was elated about the possibility.

The deal was set. But before the order was placed, her attorney heard about it and asked to discuss it with her. Her attorney had never been involved in her investments before, but she felt she should see him. She asked me to go with her.

The attorney lit into me as soon as we entered his office. During a lengthy conversation, he was insulting, overbearing and authoritarian about subjects of which he had no knowledge. I endured this patiently, attempting to explain the facts in the matter. The deal was too important for me to be anything but pleasant.

Finally, I had to retaliate. I didn't lose my temper; but some of his remarks were so patently false, I had to respond or else I would appear to be dishonest myself. I told him he was making himself look ridiculous by mixing up the facts. I was not vindictive, nor did I raise my voice.

But to my surprise, the little old lady took his side and apologized for my "bad manners." In that moment it was obvious I had lost the sale! There went the \$1,000 I needed so much. "Well, so be it," I thought. I couldn't blame myself for having said what I did. In fact, I *would* have blamed myself had I bowed to the lawyer's dishonesty.

I couldn't change either one of them. And either of them might choose to be unintelligent or discourteous or disrespectful. As I sat there and impersonally observed the situation, I realized that I had finally come of age. If, in my financial condition, I could weather this without regret or panic, I knew I could handle anything.

As it turned out, as soon as we left the office, the woman surprised me again by saying, "Isn't he a terrible man?" She went ahead with the investment and never again referred to the remark she had made in his office. But for about thirty minutes, I had been convinced that the sale was dead. And yet, I had felt no emotional reaction.

It took years for me to acquire this relaxed attitude, but it was worth it. It's an important asset; it brings more sales and a calm stomach. You acquire it by recognizing reality and acting accordingly.

Not everyone is going to buy from you. So don't put yourself in the position where you feel the next prospect *has* to buy. Instead, talk to enough people and have a product with fairly wide applications ~ and you'll make enough sales.

Don't ever be discouraged when you make mistakes. Observe yourself. Are you getting all the information you need to make a proper presentation? If not, don't despair. You'll improve. Keep at it. If you suddenly realize you forgot to get some important answers, stop and go back for them. Relax with your prospect. Try not to think of him as the power over your economic future. Think of the interview as a conversation.

Keep applying the techniques of this book. But never feel that the next interview has to be 100% perfect. It won't be. It may be closer to it than any in the

past. But don't panic when you make a mistake. Just keep coming back to what you know you have to do to make a sale.

Treat your prospects as social equals. Don't look up to them ~ except in any special ways in which they merit that kind of respect. And don't ever look down on them ~ no matter how much of your "knowledge" and "insight" they lack. Try to think of them as friends. But don't allow that to encourage you to digress into non-essential conversation. Keep the conversation always on the prospect's interests.

If someone is rude or unreasonable to you, don't let it throw you. That's not the first rude person in the world ~ nor the last. You'll meet others in your lifetime. Don't ever lead yourself to believe you've met the last one. But that's not *your* problem. An individual's rudeness is his own problem. It can only be yours if you start wondering how *you* could have changed him. You couldn't. He is what he is. You're a salesman, not a psychiatrist.

Go onto the next prospect, thankful that you have more to offer the world than that man you just encountered.

Your greatest success will come when you develop the ability to relax. Relax and tell the truth ~ because there is nothing you have to be afraid the prospect will find out. Relax and keep tuned to his motivations, rather than being keyed up about your personal success (that will come inevitably if you are concentrating on the prospect).

Selling is easy. It's not a life-and-death struggle with a vicious adversary.

Chapter 21

LISTEN, LISTEN, LISTEN!

Every individual lives in a world of his own ~ bounded by his own knowledge and understanding. No one else has the same knowledge and experience you have. Each person has lived a life of his own, separate from yours.

It's that separate background, that individual past, that determines the present life for each person. Each human being develops his own desires and motivations ~ but they're all based upon the things he's experienced, thought, conceived of, desired, wondered about.

And since each individual's background is different, there's no way you could possibly understand what motivates him without making an effort to find out. You can't guess what he wants, for you have no basis for knowing. You'll have to find out from him.

Each individual lives in a world of his own. And the only way you're going to find out how to make the sale is to enter that world. You must discover what makes this person what he is, what he wants, how he'll arrive at his decisions. If you do, you'll be way ahead of every other salesman who is presenting information of no interest to the prospect.

A key word in selling is *empathy*. Empathy is the ability to identify with another person's life. Empathy enables you to feel his desires, understand his attitudes. It comes more easily to some people than to others ~ but anyone can improve his ability to empathize just by trying.

Recognize the individuality of your prospect. He's a sovereign human being ~ with his own world, his own rules, his own ideas. He has just as much right to his own ideas as anyone else does. As you listen to him, try not to judge him. Your job is to discover him. Understand what it is he's trying to do ~ don't become preoccupied with whether he's smart or dumb, good or evil, attractive or unattractive.

And how do you discover him? Just *listen* to him. Listen closely ~ he's telling you how to make a sale. Don't ignore him. If you do, you're throwing away money.

Everything a man does is a reflection of his motivations. Don't make the mistake of trying to judge his acts. Instead, concentrate on discovering what they mean. When he speaks, listen. When he acts, pay attention.

For instance, suppose a man goes into a store and buys an item for three dollars ~ an item he could have bought across the street for two dollars. The temptation is to call him stupid. But why should you? How do you know what he had in mind?

The man is telling you something by his actions. He's telling you *there's something worth more than a dollar to him*. He's saying, "I'd rather pay the extra dollar in order to have something I want."

What *is* it that he wants? Maybe it was worth a dollar to him not to have to walk across the street (I know there have been times in my life when I wouldn't cross the street for a dollar). Or maybe he prefers the better service he get in the \$3 store. Or maybe he wants to be waited on by the sexy salesgirl. Whatever the reason, *it's important to him* ~ important enough to warrant paying an extra dollar for the product.

If price were everything, no one would ever part with any of his money. But money is only a means to an end. An individual spends it *because there's something he wants more than the money*. Your job is to find out what that is. When you find out, you can arrange to have him spend some of that money with you.

And you find out by listening to him, by paying attention to what he says and does, by respecting his attitude enough to try to determine what it is.

Listen to your prospect. He's telling you how to sell him something.

When he raises an element of the proposition that seems to be complicating it further, don't ignore it. Don't try to tell him it's unimportant. It is important to him ~ or he wouldn't have brought it up.

Listen to your prospect. Listen to him!

Don't be afraid of problems. Every problem is an opportunity to be of service to someone ~ to sell him a solution.

As you go about your business each day, be alert to problems that are raised in conversations. Every one of them is an opportunity for someone. Many of them will be out of line ~ but some of them won't be. You'll never know until you cultivate the

habit of listening, of discovering what it is people are concerned about. Let me give you a typical example:

Ed Lindfield is a reporter on a large, metropolitan newspaper. Although he's not a salesman by trade, he has the mind of a good salesman.

One day he walked into the news room to find some of the other reporters in a gripe session. I'm sure you've seen that picture if you've ever worked in any office. There were several men ~ each sympathizing with the others about the injustice being imposed upon them by their employer.

Ed was intelligent enough to know that griping is unproductive. But he recognized the value in listening to the gripes of other people. So he paid attention to find out what the problem was.

It seems that a new reporter had been hired and been given the easiest beat on the newspaper. The other reporters were griping because they felt the easy beat should have gone to someone who had been with the paper longer.

One man even claimed he could cover that beat in about ten hours each week. And after thinking about it, Ed realized he was right. The beat had previously been handled by a man who'd been on the paper for 18 years. When he retired, the company had hired a new reporter and given him the beat.

Thinking about it further, Ed realized that the management probably didn't even *realize* what an easy beat it was. If they had, the editors would have been more selective in assigning it.

As he was thinking about this, Ed's thoughts were interrupted by another griper who pouted, "Can you imagine? This new guy walks into the sweetest deal in the place ~ making \$150 a week doing practically nothing!"

\$150 a week! That was the final element needed to complete the picture. A problem existed and he could do something about it. An opportunity was screaming for attention but he was the only one in the room who could recognize it.

The next morning he was in the publisher's office.

Ed began the conversation with step one. What did the management want from that beat? How much were they willing to pay to get it? Did it matter which hours were used to cover the regular calls for routine news?

Then came step two. “In other words, you’re willing to pay \$150 a week to make sure you get all the news out of that area. All the regular news sources must be covered at least once each day. Is that right?”

Yes that was right ~ but Ed carried step two even further. “Mr. Doyle, you know my abilities as a reporter; I’ve been with the paper for six years. If I could show you a way to save \$80 a week, would you promise me the opportunity to carry out the savings for you?”

He received an assurance from the publisher. So now he was ready for step three ~ to present his proposal. “Mr. Doyle, you probably don’t realize that the beat we’re talking about is very easy to cover ~ especially for an experienced man. If I hadn’t approached you this morning, you’d have continued paying \$150 a week to handle it.

“My proposal is simple: I’ll cover that beat for you ~ in addition to my present duties. I assure you that I’ll fulfill all the qualifications you’ve outlined to me. If I don’t, you can take it away from me. And I’ll only charge you \$70 per week to cover it for you. That means you’ll save \$80 from what you’re paying already.”

Step four was very brief. The publisher asked him what he should do about the man they’d already hired. Ed’s answer was, “Let him accompany me. I’ll train him for you. Then you can move him into the next assignment that becomes vacant.”

Step five was even quicker. The publisher, recognizing a good listener in Ed (a characteristic of a good reporter, as well as a good salesman), accepted his offer.

Ed’s raise was over \$3,500 per year. The funny thing is that any other man in that news room the day before could have done the same thing.

In fact, as you read this, it probably seems so obvious to you that you can’t believe no one else thought of it.

But go back to that scene in the news room. Six men are sitting around the office, drinking coffee and griping about a “soft deal” someone else is getting. While this is going on, Ed’s mind is working a-mile-a-minute.

Where would *you* have been in that scene? Would you have been one of those who hated to see a new man get a better job than you had? Would you have been tempted to air your gripe, since everyone else was?

Or would it have occurred to you, as it did to Ed, that there ought to be an opportunity in this for *you*?

Only one man in a hundred recognizes situations like that as opportunities. And yet there are thousands of such opportunities around us at all times. It only takes a little time to develop the talent of seeing them.

The others saw this situation as an injustice; Ed saw it as an opportunity.

The others focused on the \$150 per week the new man was making; Ed lighted on the \$80 per week he could save the company.

Ed is in his fifties. He's a quiet man ~ certainly not the kind of "talker" most people picture as a salesman. But Ed had everything it takes to engineer a \$3,500-a-year raise for himself.

So once again we're back to the same point. Forget what you've heard about selling. It doesn't take fast talk, long hours, deceit, guts, luck, pull, or even a college diploma.

Instead, it takes a special way of looking at the world around you. Anyone who wants to succeed can acquire that talent. All you have to do is practice.

Tomorrow, when you go to work, start listening more closely to what's being said around you. Listen for opportunities.

In the case of Ed Lindfield, the need of one person (the publisher) was revealed by the complaints of others (the reporters). In other cases, it may be the needy individual himself who complains and presents you with an opportunity.

Because Ed understood the proper way to make a sale, he took no chances when he presented his proposal. He identified the objectives of the publisher and received a commitment from the publisher before he even presented his case.

Very often, step two will conclude with, "If I could....., would you.....?" You are getting a firm understanding as to the qualifications for making the sale.

But Ed would have had nothing to sell if he hadn't begun by listening. The secret ingredient is imagination ~ and everyone has it.

How many minutes (or hours) each day do you spend imagining? Why not put that imagination to work? Next time you see a problem of some kind, let your imagination run away with it. Imagine yourself solving it. How will you do it? Who suffers most from the problem the way it is now? How much do you suppose it's worth to him? What could *you* do to solve it within that budget?

Continue to imagine yourself solving the problem ~ until the picture becomes so clear that you can actually see the way you'll do it. Think about the problem while you're driving to and from work. Sometimes, it's several days before a solution strikes. And, of course, some problems are unsolvable by you. But if you tackle enough of them, you're bound to hit upon one or more that will mean money to you.

As a salesman, take a special interest in the problems of your prospects ~ especially those that relate to the business transacted between you. It may be that you'll discover a solution that's outside your field of competence. Perhaps you know someone who could handle it. Arrange to bring your customer and the solver together ~ for a commission. That's what salesmen are for.

Listen ~ listen ~ *listen* to your prospect. *He's telling you how to sell him something!*

Climb into his world and get acquainted. You'll be amazed at the opportunities you'll find.

Chapter 22

SELLING IS EVERYWHERE

If you watch many movies, you may have noticed that there's a common problem that shows up over and over again in movies ~ as well as in books and plays. The leading characters invariably become removed from each other *because of a lack of communication*.

One character holds something back from the other, and the other never bothers to ask him what's on his mind. Problems develop because there's no real communication. Neither knows what the other wants or needs or has to give. As a result, the relationship doesn't bloom until some magical moment arrives when a special insight or accident brings the truth out into the open.

These fictional plots are mirrors of real life. In the real world, the same kind of mental separation takes place ~ but usually *without* the magical moment that saves the day.

And the problem is communication. Husbands and wives don't talk about the things that are really important to each of them. Business associates each keep things to themselves and wonder what the other is thinking about. And so on.

There is one type of individual who doesn't face that kind of problem in his life. He's the communicator ~ the individual who will ask someone what's on his mind and keep after him until he gets an answer. He's the one who will reveal his own thoughts, so as to be sure he's not passing up an opportunity for a good relationship.

A communicator will never wonder for very long what someone else is thinking and intending. He'll ask. He'll get a problem out in the open where everyone concerned can see it and get to work solving it.

If he sees an attractive girl in a restaurant, he won't *wish* he could meet her. He'll go up to her and *tell* her he thinks she's attractive. After all, for all he knows

she may have noticed him, too. But who'll know that unless one of them speaks his mind?

A communicator is not a "natural born talker." But because he's willing to talk about the things that are important, he develops an ability to ask questions properly and to state his thinking clearly.

Do these attributes of a good communicator sound familiar? Of course. They're the same characteristics that describe a good salesman.

Selling is communication. Most people realize that. But the successful salesman realizes that it's *two-way* communication. A salesman has to ask well and listen well ~ in addition to talking well.

If a man is a good salesman, he's a good communicator. And he should use his talent in every phase of his life. Any situation between two individuals calls for the kind of salesmanship we've been talking about.

Always find out what the other person wants. Maybe you won't be able to grant it ~ but you'll never know until you find out. There's no point in ignoring it; it isn't going to go away.

Use these principles everywhere. Before you present an idea or proposal for anyone's approval, find out first what that person wants ~ and make sure your proposal fits into that framework.

When problems develop between you and your loved one, don't wonder what's on her mind ~ ask her! Don't be afraid of discovering that she thinks you're less than perfect. Only when you know what's troubling her can you do anything about it. Finding out paves the way for correcting it and ending the problem.

When you're applying for a job, use the five-step interview procedure: (1) find out what the company wants from the man who's going to get this job; (2) summarize those qualifications and ask if you understand them correctly; (3) present your qualifications within that framework; (4) answer any questions; and (5) ask if you have the job.

If you're told that the decision hasn't been made yet, ask when it *will* be made and on what basis. Ask if there is anything further you can do to demonstrate your qualifications.

Don't leave your fate to blind luck in any phase of your life. Do something. That means finding out what should be done from the person who's going to make the decision.

Get in the habit of asking what you want to know. Anytime you catch yourself thinking, “I wish I knew what he intends to do,” make it a point to go *ask* him what he intends to do.

If you’re afraid that people will resent your asking, you’re in for a pleasant surprise. Very rarely is it resented ~ especially if you ask in a way that indicates it’s natural for you to ask.

And only one person in a hundred would think to ask. So *you* be the one!

Yes, selling is merely communication ~ two-way communication. And communicating is selling. And both are easy.

If you think of selling as “putting something over on someone,” then you obviously won’t want to use the principles of selling with your friends and loved ones.

But if you’ve seen by now that selling is communicating and helping (and I hope you’ve seen it), then you should have no hesitation in using these principles in all phases of your life.

By the standards we’re setting, a good salesman is an outstanding person. He’s an attractive friend ~ in demand because he communicates well, has a useful imagination, and solves problems easily.

Selling is everywhere. Don’t overlook its many uses.

Chapter 23

HOW TO BEGIN

We've come a long way, you and I, since we started in the first chapter. We've turned a lot of misconceptions around and put them right. We've seen the real world the way it truly is ~ not the way the typical salesman sees it.

The important question now is: what's the best way to get started using these principles in your work right away?

Within a few minutes, you'll finish reading this book. As soon as you finish, get some paper, come back to this chapter and use the following steps to begin your new, easier selling life.

1. Without looking them up in the book, write down the five steps in the sales interview, in order. By this time, they should be very easy to remember. If they're not, look them up and write them down. Set that sheet of paper aside and glance at the five steps frequently until you can remember them easily.
2. Imagine a sales call that you'll be making tomorrow or the next day. Run through the entire interview in your mind. You have no way of knowing what the prospect will say ~ so the dream will be pure fantasy. But imagine yourself going through the five-step procedure. Get used to the idea of handling a sale in that way.
3. Take a sheet of paper and write down a series of questions to be used in step one of the interview. Also, write out an opening statement with which to begin the interview ~ a statement of the type given on page 65.

Think of all the things you'd need to know to understand a prospect's motivation. Translate these into specific questions.

4. What happens if your prospect opens the interview by asking you to show him what you have? We covered this on pages 92 & 93. You must be

prepared for that possibility. So take a sheet of paper and make a list of possible replies to such an opening. Answer his remark or question, then turn the interview around by pointing out the need to know more about his business, and then ask a typical step-one question.

5. Make another list. This one should list as many possible needs of your prospects as you can think of. List all of the various motivations that you'd expect to come up in step one. You cannot possibly list them all, of course ~ because every prospect is unique. But it's important to be prepared in advance for as many of them as possible.

After you've listed as many as you can imagine, go back over them. Next to each one, write all of the benefits of your product that would help to gratify that particular motivation. In this way, you'll begin to match motivations to product advantages much more automatically in the middle of an interview.

At the outset, you may not find yourself thinking as clearly as you'd like to in the interview. But you'll relax more as time goes on. To tide you over until then, do this homework in matching your product to motivations. That will make it easier for you to stick to the essentials in step three.

6. What are the three steps for handling objections? Without looking them up, write them down. If you can't remember them, look them up on page 75. Keep them on a separate sheet of paper and refer to them frequently until they're firmly implanted in your mind.
7. Think of as many possible ways of asking for the order as you can. Write them down and say them out loud. Find the ones that seem most comfortable to you and memorize them. Pretty soon, you'll be asking for the order in a different way for every prospect ~ and with ease and assurance. But to begin with, give yourself two or three ways you know you can say comfortably.
8. The next thing to do is to use this material. Resolve that you will not present your product until after you've found the prospect's motivation. If you stick to this formula, by the end of the first week, you'll find it very comfortable ~ and it should be showing results already.

Selling is easy. It doesn't require all the effort commonly associated with it. Even the homework suggested in this chapter is not totally necessary. But if you decide to use it, it will get you started on your new selling life faster. And it'll tide you over until these things begin to come to you naturally in the interview itself.

After you've used these techniques for two weeks, read this book again. It's not a long book ~ you can read it in an evening. You'll be surprised at how much more you get out of it in the second reading ~ *after* you've been using the principles for a couple of weeks.

If you run into a problem that isn't covered in the book, think it out for yourself. Usually, a problem seems unsolvable because you've forgotten one of these three principles: (1) respect the prospect; (2) think about the problem; (3) ask for any information you need.

Always respect the prospect. Never think of him as stupid or irrational ~ that defeats your own purpose. Instead, direct your attention toward finding out *why* he acts as he does. Never fall prey to thinking that a sales problem will be solved by exerting more control over the prospect. Respect him as being totally sovereign in his world. Your problem may have developed because you simply aren't paying attention to him.

If you have a problem in selling that keeps recurring, *think about it*. Don't keep pushing it aside mentally and wishing it didn't exist. Face it squarely. Ask yourself why there seems to be one part of the interview that doesn't go well. Once you make an attempt to see the problem as it is, you're more than half-way to solving it.

And if the problem exists because you're in the dark about something, *ask for the information you need*. Don't walk around in a fog ~ don't sit and wonder what someone else intends to do. *Ask*. If you just cultivate the habit of asking for anything you need to know, you'll be surprised at how much more rational the whole world becomes. There's no phase of life that's beyond your understanding.

I'm surprised at how often a problem has been perpetuated because I've overlooked one of those three principles. So set these three problem-solving rules onto a separate sheet of paper ~ along with the five steps of the successful sale and the three-part technique for handling objections.

Anytime you find a sales problem developing, check the list to see what you may be forgetting to do.

There will always be differences in sales results between any two salesmen ~ because there will be differences in talents. One man will have more imagination than another or one may find it easier to relax with the prospect.

But these differences, though very real, are incidental. For *any* salesman who uses these techniques is bound to get much better results. His closing percentage will go up. He'll find himself working fewer hours and making more money.

And isn't that why you bought this book?

Chapter 24

SELLING IS EASY

Selling really isn't so difficult after all, is it?

As you can see, success in salesmanship depends upon factors quite different from the common conceptions. You *don't* have to be a showman, an extrovert, forceful, flamboyant, domineering, tireless, single-minded, or even energetic.

But you *do* have to be sensitive, alert, imaginative, honest, and a good listener.

If you look at the real world, just the way it is, you can see there are certain things you'll have to recognize to succeed. None of these things is out of your reach. Let's summarize them:

1. You must recognize that *every individual is already motivated*. Every prospect has a multitude of hopes, aspirations, dreams, plans, goals and ideas. *Don't try to motivate him*. Instead, discover his present motivation.
2. Since every individual is different, there's no way of knowing in advance what will make *this* prospect buy. Your job is to discover what it is that motivates *this* individual, and then offer your product in terms dictated by that motivation. The secret of salesmanship can be summed up in the simple rule: *Find this prospect's motivation and appeal to it*.
3. Never present your product until *after* you have discovered what motivates the prospect. There are literally hundreds of possible motivations to which your product might appeal. Don't make the mistake of trying to outguess the prospect ~ it isn't necessary. Wait until you've found out what he'd be willing to buy before trying to sell him anything.
4. To increase your chances to make the sale, follow the five-step procedure:

1 - *Discover the prospect's motivation.* Ask leading questions that encourage the prospect to talk about those areas of his life or business that will reveal the motivations to which you can appeal. Take an intense interest in all relevant problems that face the prospect. He's telling you how to make the sale.

2 - *Summarize the prospect's motivation.* Sum up the material presented to you in step one. Define the problem or summarize the objective so that you understand together what must be done to achieve his goals. In effect, you are confirming the qualifications you'll have to meet to make the sale.

3 - *Present your product.* Now that you know what the prospect wants, you can present your product as the answer to that quest. Build your presentation around those matters (and *only* those matters) the buyer has said are important.

4 - *Answer questions.* Handle any reservations or objections the prospect may have; make sure he fully understands the proposal and the way it will satisfy his motives. In handling objections, don't try to overrule the prospect's thinking. Instead, use the *listen-agree-suggest* technique outlined in chapter seven.

5 - *Close the sale.* You should never find yourself locked in a life-and-death struggle with the buyer when it comes time to close the sale. If you've done your job properly in the first four steps, you only have to encourage him now to do what he wants to do.

5. Selling is easy if you *don't try to put anything over on the prospect*. Think of yourself as a representative of the buyer as well as of the company for whom you work. Look for motivations that will create a mutually-profitable exchange between buyer and seller. Never think of yourself as someone who tries to "talk people into things."
6. *Be honest at all times.* Honesty is not a self-denying virtue. It's one of the greatest assets a salesman can have. If you're honest at *all* times, you can relax completely ~ knowing you have nothing to cover up. And your honesty will be recognized by many prospects who will then prefer to do business with you. In addition, there is an indefinable confidence that the honest man expresses that can never be impersonated fully.
7. An attorney's field is law and his success depends upon an understanding of its many angles and ramifications. A doctor's field is health and *his* success depends upon his ability to diagnose, prescribe and operate.

What is a salesman's field? It is *communication*. A salesman's success depends upon his ability to *understand* his prospects and prescribe solutions to their problems. But his solutions must be presented in terms that fit the motivations of the prospect (not the motivations or opinions of the salesman).

Yes, communication is all-important. But most salesmen never learn that the essence of salesmanship is *two-way* communication. Your success depends as much upon your ability to *hear* and *understand* as it does upon your ability to *talk*.

In fact, I will always hire a poor talker who can hear and understand over an extrovert who talks well but doesn't take an interest in his prospect's motives. The good listener will always outsell the big talker. There will be some situations in which the poor talker will lose out ~ possibly because he won't be able to get a hearing. But in the long run, he'll close more sales.

These seven points are the basic rules of successful selling ~ yet not more than one experienced salesman in a hundred practices them. As a result, for most salesmen selling is difficult, even frightening. And it's not nearly as lucrative as it should be.

But the man who follows these rules finds that selling is easy. He doesn't walk around with a knot in his stomach, for he has no one to be afraid of. He approaches every sales situation with the knowledge that he knows how to get the sale if there's a sale to be had.

And that kind of confidence isn't hot air, either. He doesn't pump himself full of false enthusiasm by mumbling mystical statements to himself. His confidence derives from the knowledge that he'll discover what the prospect wants ~ and so he can offer it to him, if it's his to provide.

He has no fear because he never thinks of his prospect as an adversary. Occasionally, he runs into someone who is rude, arrogant or irrational. So be it. He has known all along that such people exist in this world and he's never felt that his success was dependent upon his ability to *change* those people.

He knows he isn't going to sell everyone, because not everyone will want what he has to offer. But before he terminates the interview, he'll check every possible way that his product might match up with a motivation of the prospect.

The effective salesman knows that selling is also a matter of numbers. He'll close a certain percentage of his presentations ~ but there's no way to tell in advance in what order the presentations will fall.

The good salesman ~ the man who listens before he talks ~ will close a higher percentage than others will. To improve further on that, he'll look for ways to

upgrade his prospects, to qualify them better in advance, to improve his methods of listening and presenting his product. As a result, selling is very lucrative to him. He works short hours, makes good money, and has time to do those things that bring him happiness.

The effective salesman works with the world *as it is*. He doesn't try to change others. He doesn't try to wish away problems or pray he'll be struck by the lightning of success. Seeing reality as it is, he knows he can deal with it ~ to get what he wants.

He knows there are certain laws of human nature that will apply in every situation. He knows that each individual he meets will be seeking certain predetermined ends of his own. And he knows that these ends will be fairly unique to this one individual. With this knowledge, he recognizes that there's only one way to get the sale: *discover those predetermined ends and help the prospect achieve them*.

What could be difficult about *that*? It's really a lot easier than wishing or trying to change others ~ and a lot more profitable.

Respect the world as it is. Don't try to play God and determine how it *should* have been made. It's not a very fruitful past-time. A key trait of a successful salesman is his ability to recognize reality for what it is and to respect it as it is.

At the same time, don't be afraid to use your imagination. It takes imagination to match motivations with product features. But this kind of imagination is not a wishing-away of reality. Instead, it is the ability to match up various parts of reality.

Use your imagination. Dream a little. Let your mind wander in search of a way that your product could do something for one of your prospect's stated objectives. But never let your imagination roam to the point that it's *ignoring* your prospect's motivations. You can't wish away reality. If you try to do so, you'll be the loser.

Selling is easy. Don't make it difficult by forgetting the basic principles of reality and salesmanship that govern the real world.

There's nothing mysterious about salesmanship ~ although there may be times when you won't be able to discover a prospect's motivation. Other than that occasional dilemma, however, you'll always know where you stand. You'll know why you made each sale and you'll know why some others didn't buy from you.

Whenever you approach a prospect, keep in mind that "This man I'm dealing with is seeking his own happiness in life. He has a pretty good idea how he's going to get it. Am I thinking in *his* terms ~ or am I trying to impose *my* way upon him?"

“His happiness is the object; his interests are the subject. Am I discussing the matter within the boundaries of his understanding and his objective ~ or am I trying to make him do something he doesn’t want to do?

“Am I climbing into his world ~ or am I attempting to get him to give up his world for me?

“For these minutes while I’m with him, I should be totally preoccupied with his life. By being in tune with him, I can show him how to get what he wants and I’ll make the sale.”

Remember, he’ll only buy when he believes he’ll receive more than he’s giving up. Therefore, you must discover what would be profitable to him and appeal to that.

All the “glib talking” in the world, all the gimmicks in the world, all the lies in the world ~ these things won’t create enough sales for you to make selling an attractive profession.

There’s only one way to make the sale: *Find this prospect’s motivation and appeal to it.*

If you do, selling will be as easy for you as it’s been for me.

EPILOGUE

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Harry Browne was an American free-market Libertarian writer and the Libertarian Party's 1996 and 2000 candidate for President of the United States. He was also a well-known investment advisor for over thirty years, author of "Harry Browne's Special Report" – a financial newsletter published from 1974 - 1997, author of 16 books and thousands of articles, co-founder of the libertarian Downsize DC Foundation, host of two weekly network radio shows -- one a political and the other a financial show, host of an ETV (internet-based television) show called "This Week in Liberty with Harry Browne" on the Internet based Free Market News Network, a consultant to the Permanent Portfolio Family of Funds, and a popular public speaker.

He was a little known investment advisor when his first book, *How You Can Profit from the Coming Devaluation*, was published in 1970. Recognizing the disastrous monetary policy of the U.S. government, he warned that the dollar would be devalued, inflation could be severe, and gold, silver, and foreign currencies should skyrocket in value. The book's theme clashed with the prevailing wisdom, but it struck a chord with tens of thousands of Americans, and the book made the *New York Times* bestseller list.

In 1973 he published *How I Found Freedom in an Unfree World*, a self-help book that shows individuals how to take responsibility for their own lives. Many people consider the book to be a modern classic, and it remains in demand three decades after its first publication.

His 1974 book, *You Can Profit from a Monetary Crisis*, was an even greater success -- remaining on the *Times* bestseller list for 39 weeks and reaching #1. Its message amplified themes from his first book, and it allowed thousands of investors to hold their own and to profit during the turmoil of the late 1970s. He wrote six more big-selling investment books -- including one more *Times* bestseller. In 1999 he published his final investment book, *Fail-Safe Investing*.

His 1995 book, *Why Government Doesn't Work*, provided a provocative mix of ideas that spoke to hundreds of thousands of Americans who felt frustrated by big government. The *Great Libertarian Offer*, was published in June, 2000. His 2004 book was *Liberty A to Z: 872 Libertarian Soundbites You Can Use Right Now!*

In Browne's presidential campaigns, he made appearances in almost every state, and he appeared on over a thousand radio and television programs. His pure approach to smaller government was praised in scores of newspaper editorials and political columns. He won numerous Internet preference polls and was endorsed for president by dozens of radio talk show hosts and journalists.

During his career he appeared on the *Today* show, *Hannity & Colmes*, *The O'Reilly Factor*, *Meet the Press*, *Politically Incorrect*, *Wall Street Week*, *The Larry King Show*, and hundreds of other national and local radio and television shows.

Browne had a daughter, Autumn, and in 1985 married the former Pamela Lanier Wolfe. His main non-professional interests were classical music, fiction, opera and operettas, good food and wine, sports, and television. He was born in New York City, grew up in Los Angeles, and died from a motor neuron disease (e.g. ALS) at his home in Franklin, Tennessee on March 1, 2006 with his devoted wife, Pamela, beside him.